



PHD

**Sensemaking, metaphor and mission in an Anglican context**

Roberts, Vaughan S

*Award date:*  
1999

*Awarding institution:*  
University of Bath

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# Sensemaking, Metaphor and Mission in an Anglican Context

Submitted by Vaughan S Roberts  
for the degree of PhD of the University of Bath 1999

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# Sensemaking, Metaphor and Mission in an Anglican Context

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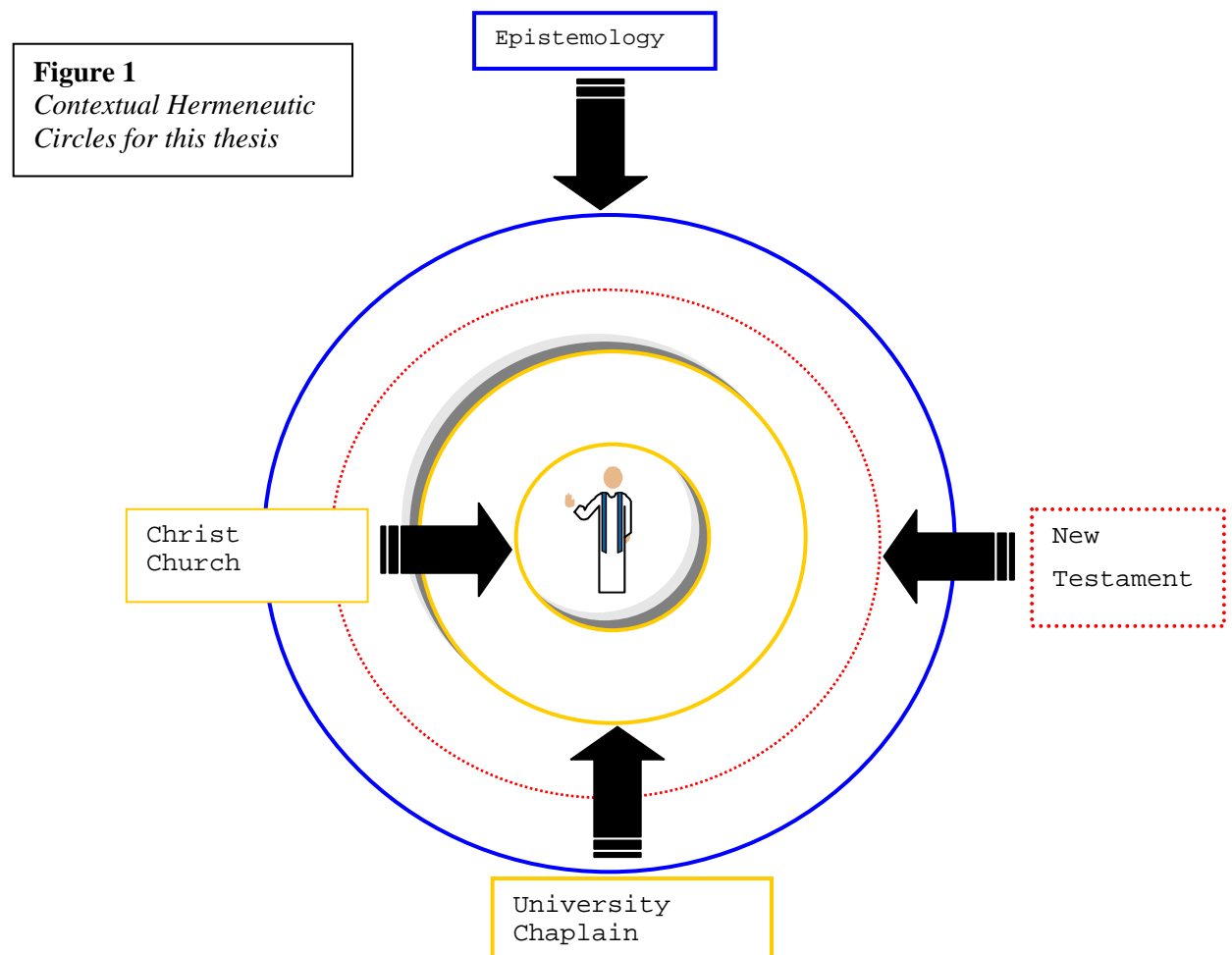
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# Abstract:

This thesis is a reflexive account of the researcher's sensemaking processes as an Anglican priest in two unusual organizational but specific ecclesial contexts. Those are: from August 1989 to December 1996 as University Chaplain at the University of Bath and from January 1992 to December 1996 as Priest in Charge of Christ Church, Bath. A particular focus of this research is how the metaphor of the body emerged as a key image for organizational sensemaking in this account. To this end the thesis explores four of the frameworks in which the researcher was working. That is my understanding of (i) epistemology (ii) higher education chaplaincy (iii) the role of Christ Church and (iv) the historical context of the Church as an organization. This is represented throughout the thesis as a series of circles (see figure 1).



The Preface introduces the concept of organizational sensemaking and the three elements which contribute to the sensemaking process in this thesis — (a) narrative; (b) metaphor & poetry; and (c) conversation. From this introduction I proceed to

discuss in Section 1 some of the epistemological narratives which undergird this research, particularly the rise of modernity, the emergence of positivism and subsequent critiques of this all-pervasive intellectual framework. Section 2 explores my early experience as an Anglican priest and as a University Chaplain, and my first attempts at organizational sensemaking. Section 3 outlines my attempts at creating a sensemaking within the context of Christ Church. Both the University Chaplaincy and Christ Church are organizational anomalies within the Church of England and the thesis examines this feature more in Section 5 using the body metaphor. As a precursor to that, Section 4 discusses how the origins of that organizational image are currently perceived within the early history of Christianity – particularly in relation to Jesus and Paul. The thesis concludes by outlining my own embodied understanding of the Church which has emerged from this reflexive project.

# Acknowledgements

Many people have played a part in this sensemaking journey and I owe them all a great debt of thanks. My own university chaplain, Barry C. Morgan, and my training incumbent, Christopher W. Herbert, provided role models and inspiration for my ministry at the University of Bath and at Christ Church. There were staff of the University without whom this project would never have begun, particularly Professors Mike Danson, Bernard Silverman and David Sims. My thanks must go to the officers of the Chaplaincy Management Committee (Sue Boucher, John Clutterbuck, Albert Preston, Michael Painting, Liz Bird and Angela Harrington) plus my colleagues on the Chaplaincy team for their support (Barry Chapman, Tom Gunning, Sue Henderson, the late Peter Hodgson, Brian McEvoy, Roger Nunn, John Rackley, Anne Wilkinson-Hayes). The four Lay Assistants (John Parnaby, Chris Smaling, Chris Gladstone and Emma Quickenden) were all wonderful to work with and their unstinting efforts and unfailing good humour made my job so much easier. I am also grateful to Emma Quickenden for taking the photograph of the centrepiece of the 'Wisdom of God' triptych in the Chaplaincy Centre, which is used at the start of each section. In addition, there are several people to thank at Christ Church not least: clergy (Ronald Broackes, Marcus Braybrooke, Albert North); readers (Sarah Sheppard, Cyril Selmes, Tom Slade); churchwardens (Margaret Heath, John Metcalfe, Conrad Calvert); Church Council officers (Yvonne Morris, Jo John, Ann Charman, Wilma Parkinson). It is difficult not to implicate others in one's own mistakes but nevertheless I must thank those who have read various papers that contributed to this thesis and previous drafts of this document – including: John Burgess, Marcus Braybrooke, Barry Chapman, Graham Dodds, Nicky Gladstone, Margaret Heath, Clive Marsh, Sarah Sheppard, Bernard Silverman, David Sims and Jim Thompson. I confess to not always taking their advice but their comments have always been helpful. Three *large* "thank you's" go to: Iain Mangham for supervising this project; Helen Hobbs who throughout my seven years at the Chaplaincy provided marvellous secretarial assistance; and finally, to Mandy, Becky and Jon who were a tremendous support all the way through this journey.



# Preface: On Method & Sensemaking

*Moving away is only to the boundaries  
of the self. Better to stay here,  
I said, leaving the horizons  
clear. The best journey to make  
is inward. It is the interior  
that calls.*

from “Groping” by R. S. Thomas (Thomas 1984)

## 1. Introduction To This Thesis

Karl E. Weick recounts the tale of how three baseball umpires were discussing the task of calling balls and strikes. “The first one said, ‘I calls them as they is.’ The second one said, ‘I calls them as I sees them.’ The third and cleverest umpire said, ‘They ain’t nothin’ till I calls them.’” (Weick 1979 [1969]: 1) That the story seems to capture an essential part of social and organizational sensemaking – that is, it is a reflexive process upon regular and irregular patterns of human behaviour, which are interpreted by actors engaged in their communal roles. My research sets out to explore this process of sensemaking in a specific organizational context in which I was involved between 1989 and 1996.

However, before I introduce that context, it is important to note the descriptive process which is already underway in this thesis. I shall argue that metaphor is crucial to the way in which we frame and understand organisations and in the opening sentences I have used two fundamental metaphors in organizational discourse – sport and acting. Sporting images help to frame many other activities. For example, we talk about: *the field of play*, *rules of the game*, he’s out of the *race*, that’s the luck of the *draw*, a *level playing field* it’s a *toss up*, what is to be our *goal*, she is the best person to go *into bat* for us, we’re *ahead of the game* and so on. The same is true for the concept of role. Thus, we *dress up* and use *make up* to go out, *stage* parties, *entertain* friends, *upstage* political opponents, *prompt* candidates in interviews, *perform* marital duties, *act out* our emotional difficulties (Mangham & Overington 1987: 27). Although I shall touch on both of these metaphors during the course of this narrative,

it is important to note at the outset that organizational metaphor will be an important aspect of all that follows and the *key* organizational metaphor for my thesis is that of the *body*.

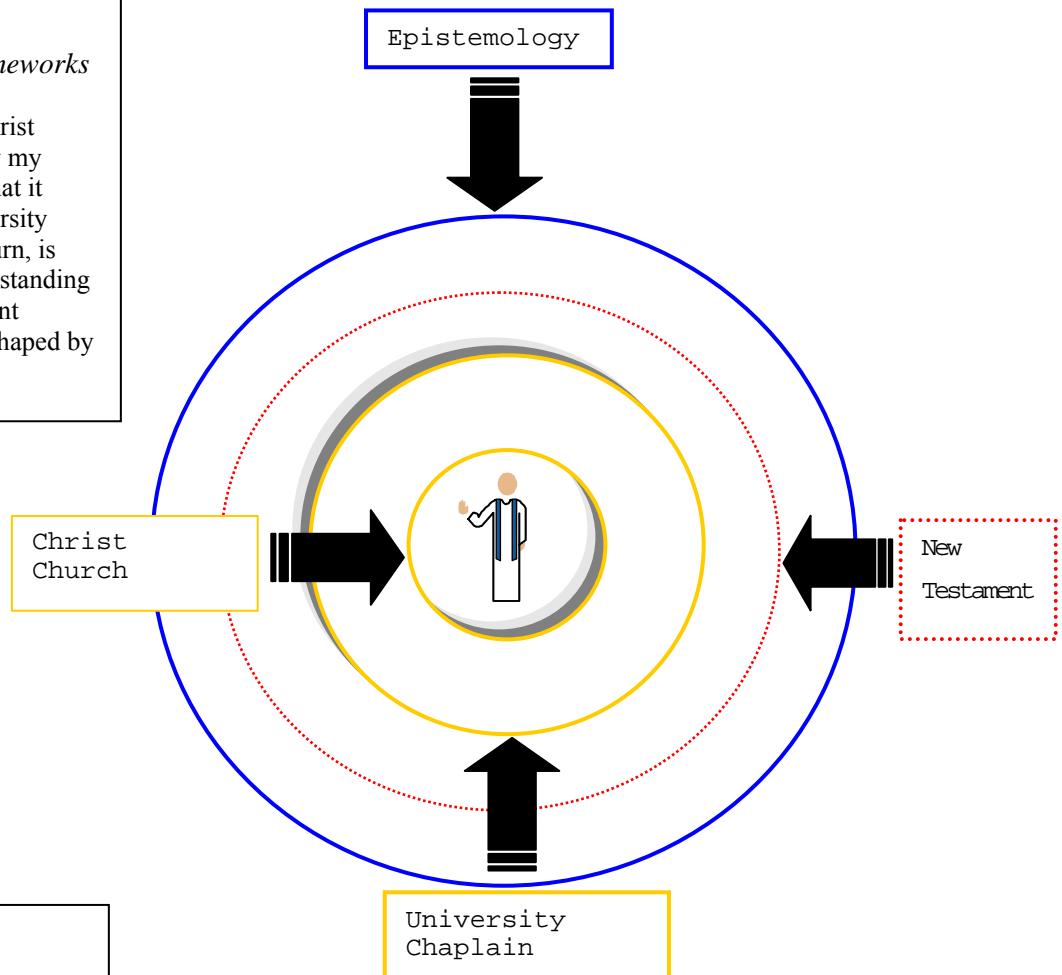
What then is the context for my research? That, in itself, is a complex question. One response is to see what follows as a series of concentric circles moving out from the centre to the bigger picture (see **Figures 1a** and **1b**). Within an organizational framework, this project began as a piece of research into an unusual Anglican church in Bath called Christ Church. The Church of England is organised on a parochial basis in which each church is set within a parish context and therefore has responsibility for a specific geographic area. Christ Church has no such parish and, as such is an organizational anomaly within its diocese (the Diocese of Bath & Wells) and the wider Anglican Church. Progressing out from Christ Church to the next circle, I was appointed University Chaplain at the University of Bath in 1989 and became Officiating Minister at Christ Church in 1992, holding the two appointments together until 1996. As is common in the Church of England my five-year contract as University Chaplain finished in 1994 and was renewed for a further two years until 1996. Church of England higher education chaplaincies are also organizational anomalies within the Church in that they, too, do not generally have parochial responsibilities. One consequence of this situation is that the role of an Anglican priest in a university chaplaincy cannot be immediately defined in terms of an Anglican priest in a regular parish setting. Thus, my research into the nature of Christ Church as a non-parochial church within the Church of England developed into an exploration of how I became involved at Christ Church through my search for a role as University Chaplain. In that respect, this thesis does not utilise an established research format. For example, it does not set out to test a hypothesis, nor is its aim to collect quantitative data with a view to then providing an ‘objective interpretative framework. Neither can it be regarded as a piece of participant observation, which proceeds through an action enquiry approach to reflect upon the context of research and the role of the researcher. It is a reflexive account of my experience as a chaplain in higher education and how that developed into a link with a local, non-parochial Anglican church.

In **Figure 1b** the role of researcher leads to the widest of the circles I shall be addressing in my thesis. That is the question how a researcher ‘knows’ what she or he claims to ‘know’. At a personal level, I have long been fascinated by questions of epistemology and hermeneutics and this is reflected in the epistemological framework I have outlined in Section 1. I shall locate the ontological basis of modernity in the

**Figure 1a**

*Hermeneutic Frameworks*

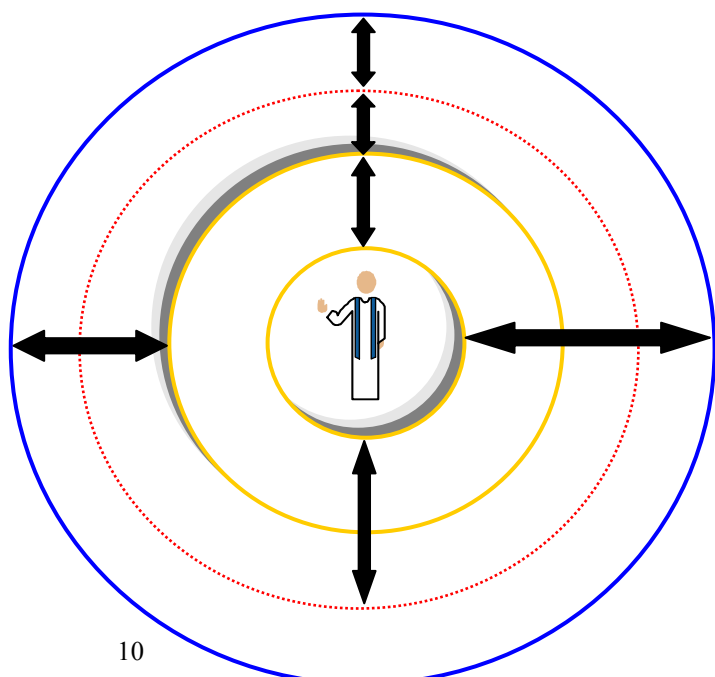
My organizational understanding of Christ Church is framed by my understanding of what it means to be a University Chaplain. That, in turn, is framed by my understanding of the New Testament traditions which is shaped by my epistemology.



**Figure 1b**

*Hermeneutic Interpretation*

The interaction between all these hermeneutical circles runs in two directions. Thus, for example, although my epistemology frames my understanding of higher education chaplaincy, my understanding of higher education chaplaincy influences my epistemology.



ideas of Descartes and Kant before tracing two paths from their ideas – one through a series of atheistic responses (Schleiermacher, Hegel and Kierkegaard) and the other through a series of atheistic responses (Marx, Nietzsche and Freud). One of the reasons for highlighting this diversity is to undercut the tendency in some quarters to talk of the Enlightenment Project as if it had a reified and monolithic existence. A key element in this thesis is to explore my perceptions about how Christianity and the Church relate to pluralistic environments. I shall argue that it is fundamentally misguided to regard the Enlightenment or Modernity or, even, Christianity as unified and hegemonic. In that respect, I shall follow a phenomenological route through the work of Paul Ricoeur, Mark Johnson and others to contemporary concerns about human embodiment and explore how our hermeneutics of *self* interact with *organizational* hermeneutics. That is why the quote from R.S. Thomas is used at the beginning of this section, particularly the line: “The best journey to make is inward. It is the interior that calls.”

I shall argue strongly that journeys into organizations and journeys into self are inextricably linked. These are *contextual* hermeneutic circles and I have shown them in two different ways. In **Figure 1a** my understanding of chaplaincy work in higher education is placed within an epistemological frame and my perspectives on Christ Church within the frame of the Chaplaincy. **Figure 1b** makes it clear that these frameworks all interact with each other and they are not set out in a sequential hierarchy. Two other related points should be made about these contextual hermeneutic circles. First, an important historical frame is provided by the foundation documents of Christianity – the New Testament. The body and notions of embodiment play a vital role in both the gospels and epistles and, as Hegel and many subsequent thinkers have observed, Christianity is predicated on the basis of a missing body. Indeed Jesus framed his final prophetic action on the cross with a meal in which he symbolically interpreted what was about to happen to his body. This New Testament framework is represented in **Figures 1a and 1b** with a broken yellow line. Second, the *historical context* for both Anglican higher education chaplaincy and the story of Christ Church will be significant for the organizational understanding of their roles outlined in this thesis. The specific, historical framework is represented

diagrammatically by the shading around the contextual circles for both the University Chaplain and Christ Church.

Finally I must comment on the place of self at the centre of this organizational hermeneutic. To those of a postmodern disposition this may seem like a mere re-occurrence of a discredited Cartesian cogito – the independent, omniscient God-like self who is at the centre of all knowing. I believe this would be to misread my diagram. This thesis is not about a disembodied *Cartesian* cogito but an embodied, *contextual* cogito. My project began as an exploration into the organizational character of Christ Church but developed outwards to examine the wider context of the research and inwards as a search for the nature of the self who was attempting to make sense of his social situation. In that respect, I gave a great deal of thought as to whether the ‘self’ at the centre of my contextual, hermeneutic circles should be ‘in role’ or ‘out of role’. Since the focus of this thesis is my attempts at sensemaking as an Anglican priest rather than solely as ‘Vaughan Roberts’, it made better sense to depict the ‘self’ in the ecclesiastical role that is central to what follows. In many ways this approach shares common ground with Wesley Carr’s central point in his work on priesthood. He argues that any minister, priest or vicar should begin any reflection on role with the question: ‘What is happening to me and why?’ (Carr 1985: 33).

## 2. Introduction to Sensemaking

As I have already stated, this piece of research is a reflexive<sup>1</sup> account of my approach to organizational sensemaking while I was a higher education chaplain at the University of Bath and, latterly, Officiating Minister at Christ Church Bath.

Consequently, the setting for this project is quite specific in that it is a narrative of one Anglican priest trying to understand his role within a particular, but very diverse, organizational context. It could, of course, be quite different and other approaches

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<sup>1</sup> The growing importance of reflexivity in the quest for knowledge has been noted by many social commentators (e.g. Giddens 1991, 1993 [1976]; Beck 1992; Bauman 1993; Crossley 1996; Flanagan 1996). It is also instanced in the organizational methodology known variously as: qualitative research (Mangham 1978, Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe 1991), action research (Reason & Rowan 1981, McNiff 1988, Torbert 1991), grounded theory (Layder 1993), action learning (Morgan 1993), active learning (Hampden-Turner 1994) and action inquiry (Torbert 1991; Fisher & Torbert 1995). See also Boje, Gephart & Thatchenkery 1996 for discussions on reflexivity in organizations.

could have been adopted. For instance, it would have been possible to send out questionnaires to all current university chaplains inquiring about their perspectives on higher education ministry. Significantly, Barry C Morgan took this approach with his research into Anglican chaplaincies in higher education in the 1980s (B. Morgan 1986). In some ways my ideographic account, which provides a detailed narrative of one person's experience as an Anglican chaplain, is intended to *complement* Morgan's more quantitative research, rather than supersede it. In addition, I shall outline several reservations about a methodology rooted in a positivist ideology (1.2.5). The results of questionnaires can be manipulated to produce a dubious 'objectivity' and mask the assumptions, presuppositions and guiding hand of the researcher. This thesis is essentially a piece of qualitative research and a narrative of my sensemaking conversations while University Chaplain at Bath. I shall say more about the role of narrative and conversation in my thesis below but, instead of moving from particular instances (date) to general principles (hypothesis), this research will be reflexive account of my lived experience in a *specific* context. In the *process* this narrative will also raise some wider organizational issues in the Church of England.

This reflects Weick's use of geological metaphor to describe the sensemaking process, when he argues that:

Research and practice in sensemaking needs to begin with a mindset to look for sensemaking, a willingness to use one's own life as data, and a search for those outcroppings and ideas that fascinate. (Weick 1995: 191)<sup>2</sup>

But, what is 'sensemaking'? Weick gives this concept a distinctly hermeneutical flavour when he states that it is about "such things as placement of items into frameworks, comprehending, redressing surprise, constructing meaning, interacting in

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<sup>2</sup> On biography and reflexivity in organizations, Kieran Flanagan notes: The sociology of organization, which appears to be purely descriptive, has a hidden agenda of power and management of resources that enables and disables and that calls for a sociology of judgement as to which side analysis ought to be tilted. Each of these topics presupposes a disposition on the part of the sociologist, where moral and cultural resources of his self are tapped in a biographical manner that can appear to be unreflexive, but which contains a potential to be reflexive." (Flanagan 1996: 30) I shall explore more of this "agenda of power in Section 5.

pursuit of mutual understanding, and patterning” (Weick 1995: 6). He goes on, in a modernist turn of phrase, that sensemaking is “less about discovering than it is about invention. To engage in sensemaking is to construct, filter, frame, create facticity, and render the subjective into something more tangible” (Weick 1995: 13-14). However the engineering metaphors change later on when he underlines the importance of talk, discourse and conversation for social contact and organizations (Weick 1995: 41). At this point he speaks of a manager as “conventional author” and having a very creative role. There is a significant overlap here with Anthony Thiselton’s comments on the hermeneutical approaches of Gadamer and Heidegger. Thiselton’s contends that both German philosophers perceive acts of interpretation (or ‘sensemaking’ in Weick’s terminology) as creative acts similar to the performance of a piece of music or the painting of a picture (Thiselton 1980: 298-99, 337-40; 1992: 3).<sup>3</sup> I shall consider the role of creativity and imagination in research more fully in Section 1 (**1.3.3** and **1.4.1**). However, the issue of a positivist approach to data collection is discussed by Weick in a reference to John Steinbeck’s trip to the Gulf of California in 1941 to collect biological specimens, which included the counting of spines on a fish called the Mexican Sierra, Weick argues that:

Spine-counters are like clock readers and people who count organizational trappings and report some of the least important realities. To get the organization into countable, measurable form is to strip it of what made it worth counting in the first place. (Weick 1979 [1969]: 29)

I, personally, would not be so dismissive of ‘spine-counting’ since such figures can provide useful information and perspectives. However, it is important to be clear that such an approach is not *only* methodology that can be adopted and it has the significant disadvantage of not acknowledging the creative role that the researcher always plays in the research process. To return to Weick’s earlier image, this creative narrative represents some of the searching that I have undertaken amongst the

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<sup>3</sup> According to Thiselton, Gadamer believes that “Interpretation is not a mechanical reproduction of the past in the present, but a creative event in its own right” (Thiselton 1980: 299)

organizational, theological and personal “outcroppings” which have fascinated me in my time as the University Chaplain at Bath and Officiating Minister at Christ Church.

Weick outlines in detail seven characteristics of sensemaking. It is a process which is (i) grounded in identity construction; (ii) retrospective; (iii) enactive of sensible environments; (iv) social; (v) ongoing; (vi) focused on and extracted by cues; (vii) driven by plausibility rather than accuracy. (Weick 1995: 17) Several of these elements will be important in this study. First, the work of identity construction which Weick understands as taking place within a complex matrix of interaction:

To shift among interactions is to shift among definitions of self. Thus the sensemaker is himself or herself an ongoing puzzle undergoing continual Redefinition, coincident with presenting some self to others and trying to decide which self is appropriate. (Weick 1995: 20)

This narrative will shift between a number of definitions of myself (e.g. university chaplain, officiating minister, Anglican priest, theology graduate) and a variety of organizational definitions for the locus of that self (e.g. chaplaincy, university, church). The dialectic between ‘self’ and ‘other’ (or ‘selves’ and ‘others’) is an important one for this study and I shall discuss this further when I consider the ideas of Paul Ricoeur (**1.3.1 and 1.3.2**). Second, the *retrospective nature* of this process will be clear at a number of points. For instance, my historical assessment of the role of the body metaphor in the origins of Christianity (with particular reference to Jesus and Paul) in Section 4 is a projection back from the present state of current research into the historical origins of Christianity. In addition, the reflections on some of my published work about the role of an Anglican priest and as a university chaplain in Section 2 are also done with the benefit of hindsight as, naturally, is this whole project. Third, by *enactment* Weick means that we create and are created by our environments – a process identified by some as ‘ontological oscillation’. One grounded example of this is that when I became a university chaplain I did not envisage developing that particular role in terms of a link with a local church but, as I describe in Sections 2 and 3, my environment helped to shape this understanding self and role. Indeed, the church with which the link developed was the impetus for this research project. Fourth, Weick draws attention to the danger of perceiving



sensemaking as an individual act and he stresses the *social and conversational* aspects of this process. The societal nature of this research will be apparent through the dialogue in all sections with those involved in the events and with those others involved in related research areas. Finally, Weick believes that:

in an equivocal, postmodern world, infused with the politics of interpretation and conflicting interests and inhabited by people with multiple shifting identities, an obsession with accuracy seems fruitless, and of not much practicable help either. Of much more help are the symbolic trappings and sensemaking, the trappings such as myths, metaphors, platitudes, fables, epics and paradigms. Each of these resources contains a good story. And a very good story.... shows patterns that may already exist in the puzzles an actor now faces, or patterns that could be created anew in the interest of more order and sense in the future. (Weick 1995: 61) <sup>4</sup>

One of the hardest tasks in this account of my retrospective process of sensemaking has been the choice of where to begin the story. As **Figure 1b** illustrates, the various contextual circles in which this sensemaking project was undertaken are all interrelated. Consequently, it is difficult to write about one circle without beginning to speak about another. Therefore, although during the period that I was at the University of Bath and at Christ Church most of the constituent parts of this narrative ran together chronologically and influences one another, for the sake of this account I have had to separate them out. However, before I indicate how I shall do this, it will be helpful to discuss further some of the key constituent elements in my approach to sensemaking; namely: narrative, metaphor and conversation.

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<sup>4</sup> Cf Fisher & Torbert's notion of 'good questions': "An organization's mission or purpose is, properly, an undying question – sometimes prodding, sometimes alerting, sometimes guiding its members ... Good questions never die. It is only our attention to them that dies. Good questions enliven parties (even political parties!), organizations and each of us individually." (Fisher & Torbett 1995:233) See also the discussion of Gallie & Sykes' use of the notion of the "essentially contested concept" in 5.2.2.

### 3. Elements of Sensemaking

#### (a) Narrative

What follows is biographical and, as such, is earthed in a narrative ontology. Such an approach has many roots. For example George Herbert Mead, the philosopher of social pragmatism and pioneer of sociology, believed history and all social sciences dealt with human psychology – thus “History is nothing but biography, a whole series of biographies” (Mead 1962: 36). More recently, another narrative outlook has been advocated by Alasdair MacIntyre:

It is because we all live out narratives in our lives and because we understand our own lives in terms of narratives that we live out that the form of narrative is appropriate for understanding the actions of others. Stories are lived before they are told. (MacIntyre 1981 : 197)<sup>5</sup>

Or, in Weick’s words, “stories are units of meaning” (Weick 1995: 131).

Following a similar trajectory, this research narrative is the telling of a “lived” story and, as such, is the account of a complex web of relationships which existed from August 1989 until December 1996 while I was University Chaplain at the University of Bath. One of the first tasks I inherited in this new job was to organise a Chaplaincy mission (entitled *Missing Piece*) to the whole university with all the Christian groups on campus. My experience of that event and the perspectives it yielded on those groups involved, helped frame the future development of my personal role as University Chaplain and how I understood the wider role of the Chaplaincy. That process of re-envisaging these roles is described here and required significant changes

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<sup>5</sup> Similar points have been made from a theological viewpoint by, amongst others, Nicholas Lash and Gerard Loughlin: “Christian faith is ineluctably grounded in random occurrence. Its forms of first order discourse are, accordingly, primarily narrative in character. Only by respecting the narrative or dramatic character of the languages of belief can theology hope to remain sufficiently sensitive to ‘that sense of complexity, even paradox, which in the public language of our poets, novelists and dramatists, is in origin, theological’” (Lash 1979: 21); cf “All human life-stories are woven out of and into other life-stories; the stories of parents and children, of friends and enemies, of all whom we have touched and touch us, however fleetingly” (Loughlin 1996: 82).

in perception about relationships in the Chaplaincy and the development of strong links with a non-parochial Anglican church in Bath. Both this church, Christ Church, and the Chaplaincy have had difficulty relating to the structures of the Church of England, as compared to most local congregations, and I have attempted to explore these relationships with the help of the body as an organizational metaphor. The description which follows is my personal and reflexive account of this process. Such an approach challenges conventional notions of objectivity and data collection but reflexivity is also seen as a key component of late-modern or post modern epistemology. A number of commentators have located this reflexive tendency in contemporary thought in the writing of Augustine, particularly in his *Confessions* (Lyotard 1984; Taylor 1989; Milbank 1990, 1997).<sup>6</sup> Whilst this thesis makes no claim to enduring quality of Augustine's classic work, I would argue what I have written is best read in terms of that genre rather than through the lens of other traditional forms of research. One issue which naturally arises here is the methodological question: How can the general then be extrapolated from this particular? An answer is given by Chadwick in his introduction to the *Confessions* where he brings together the flux of Heraclitus and the singularity of Parmenides:

The creation, made of nothing, is involved in the perpetual change and flux of time. It falls into the abyss of formless chaos, but is brought to recognize in God the one source of order and rationality. Because it comes from God, it knows itself to be in need of returning to the source whence it came. So Augustine's personal quest and pilgrimage are the individual's experience in microcosm of what is true, on the grand scale in the whole of creation. (Chadwick 1991: xxiv)

I would concur that an individual story can be a microcosm of a more widespread experience. Gareth Morgan's organizational metaphor of the hologram describes

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<sup>6</sup> "It is hardly an exaggeration to say that it was Augustine who introduced the inwardness of radical reflexivity and bequeathed it to the Western tradition of thought. The step was a fateful one, because we have certainly made a big thing of the first-person standpoint. The modern epistemological tradition from Descartes, and all that has flowed from modern culture, has made this standpoint fundamental – to the point of aberration, one might think" (Taylor 1989: 131).

something similar, where the qualities of the *whole* are enfolded in individual *parts* (Morgan 1997 [1986]: 100). In other words, to study one part of a greater unit or one aspect of organizational experience can tell us a great deal about the wider picture.

Augustine's love of antitheses (Taylor 1989; Chadwick 1991) also finds expression in this narrative. Much of this account is shaped by dialectic – notably conflict/consensus and story/counter-story. In the course of what follows I shall be developing a notion of embodied dialectic which seeks to harness the creative tension between thesis and antithesis, rather than see it collapse into the privileging of one side or another. Thus, for example, some have seen the dynamics of Christian organizations in English higher education as a dialectic (or even conflict) between inclusive and exclusive groups. The question is then posed: is it possible for these groups to co-exist or even work together? Through the story of the Chaplaincy Centre at the University of Bath I shall explore one way in which this can happen, that seeks to affirm the organizational integrity of each approach rather than raising one group's claim above the other. In this respect, the metaphor of the body will be particularly important for my organizational narrative.

One final comment to be made under this heading is that, because this research project has followed an embodied, narrative ontology, one of its underlying metaphors is that of giving birth rather than taking life. This is directly related to questions of scapegoating, which I shall be addressing at various points in the text (see especially **5.3.3**) and a powerful metaphor of the research process has been provided by the philosopher Gillian Rose, who has pointed out that:

Ethical integrity is reclaimed by each new generation who must murder their intellectual fathers in order to obtain the licence to practise the profession they learnt from them. (Rose 1996: 1)

Rose's cautions strongly from a philosophical perspective against such fratricide and a similar point has been made about hermeneutical ethics by Kevin Vanhoozer. Outlining what he takes to be an Augustinian approach to hermeneutics he argues that in the morality of reading:

The first hermeneutic reflex, *therefore should be charity towards the author*. If we come to a text believing that there is nothing in it, we are likely to go away as empty as we came. Augustine encourages readers to approach texts, particularly the classics and especially the scriptures, in the expectation that they contain something valuable and true.” (Vanhoozer 1998: 32 – my italics)

I shall argue that is we are to understand hermeneutics of ‘self’ in terms of hermeneutics of ‘other’ (and organizational hermeneutics in terms of this dialectic of self and other – see **1.3.3** and **1.4.1**) the charity towards ‘other’ should be the first *organizational* reflex as well as the first *hermeneutical* reflex. Although this thesis will adopt a critical approach to itself and to others, I shall resist strongly any temptation to epistemological fratricide. The aim will not be to kill of alternative perspectives but to bring them into a creative relationship. Nevertheless, there will be death and fatalities because any research project (like all human endeavours) can only be contingent. They outlast their time and they are superseded by other ideas and other projects. Once again the metaphor of the body is significant here in that it, too, is contingent.

It is important to re-iterate that the body has been a key image for my understanding of the Church. In the early part of my ministry it functioned merely as a means of understanding organizational plurality (Roberts 1989 – reproduced in Appendix 2). However in the course of my time as University Chaplain and in the process of this research I have refined and developed my understanding of the body metaphor such that an *embodied* notion of the Church should take on the characteristics that I have already utilised in this introduction. Thus, as embodied Church and an embodied narrative should be: (i) biographic; (ii) relational; (iii) reflexive; (iv) dialectical and (v) contingent. I shall outline in detail the embodied understanding of the Church with which I shall be working in this thesis towards the end of the next section (**1.5.2**).

## (b) Metaphor & Poetry

I have already noted above that metaphor can play an important part in shaping our perceptions of human sociality. Curiously for all his affirmation about the importance

of talk and metaphor in organizations, Weick seems to maintain the view that metaphors only stand for something else rather than perceiving human language to be fundamentally and irreducibly metaphorical (Lakeoff & Johnson, McFague, Soskice). I shall consider this matter further in Section 1 when discussing the ideas of Paul Ricoeur and Mark Johnson. On the matter of poetry, that is not usually seen as a natural, dialogical partner with organizational analysis. There are stronger links between poetry and the study of philosophy than with the study of organizations. Such links extend back, at least as far as Aristotle and in commenting on the role of poetry in Aristotle's writing Loughlin states:

Poetry can be prose narrative, but unlike history, which can also be prose and verse and which 'tells of what has happened', poetry tell of 'the kind of things that might happen.' It teaches universal possibilities or truths.  
(Loughlin 1996: 144)

In addition, from a sociological perspective Robin Gill has argued that poetic language is at the heart of relational discourse (Gill 1988: 125) and some writers on organizations have found poetry a helpful tool in social analysis (e.g. Bate 1994, Inns & Jones 1996). Although it is also acknowledged that there can be sharp differences between poetic and organizational metaphor:

In poetry, metaphors seem to be used primarily to generate a gestalt, emotive and holistic understanding of the subject. In organization theory, they may initially do this but are then used with the aim of enabling a rational, reductionist understanding focusing on the analysis of one aspect or organizational life at the expense of another. (Inns & Jones 1996: 113)

Inns & Jones illustrate this with reference to W.H. Auden's "Twelve Songs" where metaphors are used to convey the experience of death and are employed implicitly whereas, by contrast, Gareth Morgan's use of the brain metaphor for organizations is somehow 'literalized' as a tool for analysis. Inns & Jones argue that behind Morgan's approach lies a thinly disguised positivism which privileges science over art, cognition over emotion and discipline over creativity. I shall discuss the western

tradition of scientific progress further in Section 1, including some trenchant critiques of positivism in **1.2.5**.

Paul Bate has also suggested that poets and poetry could have an important role in organizational theory (Bate 1994: 250-59). He draws attention to the importance of language in organizations and argues that the poet is a good metaphor for those involved in organizational leadership. Commenting on poets' suitability for leadership roles Bate notes:

Language occupies a place at the very heart of the organizational processes. It is the main thing we use when we want to get things done. As a number of writers have pointed out, we generally prefer to use language as a substitute for raw power or brute force in organizations, and because of this preference language has come to be the main vehicle through which most of our activities take place. If this is the case, who could be better qualified for the job [of leadership] than those masters of language the poets and prose fiction writers? (Bate 1994: 251)

The imaginative language of various poets will play an important role in framing this research project and, as I have noted, I shall explore the role of imagination further in the next section, especially in respect of Mark Johnson's work (**1.4.2**).

To return specifically to the question of metaphor, the theologian Janet Martin Soskice has provided the following, succinct definition: It is "speaking of one thing in terms which are seen to be suggestive of another" (Soskice 1985: 49). This shares a good deal of common ground with the approach outlined by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson who argue that the "essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another." (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 5) Later on they broaden this definition by talking about understanding "one domain of experience" in terms of another (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 117) and these domains of experience are conceptualised as "experiential gestalts" which are structured wholes recurrent within human experience. According to Lakoff and Johnson metaphors play a key role in this coherent organization of our experience and they highlight three distinct types:

1. **Orientational metaphors** – our experiences and activities are structured by metaphor, e.g. ‘more is up’ (the number of books printed each year keeps going *up*; my income *rose* last year; please turn the heat *up*; you received a *high* mark in your examination) or ‘happy is up’ (I’m feeling *up*; that *boosted* my spirits; my spirits *rose*; you’re in *high* spirits; thinking about her always gives me a *lift*.)
2. **Ontological metaphors** – more abstract concepts can be viewed metaphorically as objects, e.g. ‘time is money’ (you’re *wasting* my time; this gadget will *save* you hours; how do you *spend* your time these days; that flat tyre *cost* me an hour; I’ve *invested* a lot of time in him; she’s living on *borrowed* time) or ‘vitality is a substance’ (she’s *brimming* with vim and vigour; she’s *overflowing* with vitality; he’s *devoid* of energy I don’t *have* energy *left* at the end of the day; I’m *drained*; that *took a lot out of* me.)
3. **Structural metaphors** – our conceptual system detects metaphorical similarities, e.g. ‘ideas are food’ (all this paper has is *raw facts*, *half-baked ideas* and *warmed over theories*; there are too many facts here to *digest*; I just can’t *swallow* that claim; that argument *smells fishy*; let me *stew* over that for a while; that’s *food for thought*; that’s an idea you can *sink your teeth into*) or ‘life is a container’ (I’ve had a *full* life; life is *empty* for him; there’s not much life *left* in him; her life is *crammed* with activities; *get the most out of* life; his life *contained* a great deal of sorrow.)

They argue that human conceptual systems are “mostly metaphorical in nature” (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 185 and therefore we do not have access to objective and unconditional truth, yet neither are they willing to accept an alternative based on “subjectivity and arbitrariness” (ibid). They believe there is a further choice beyond, what they call, the myths of objectivism and subjectivism, defining myths as:

Ways of comprehending experience; they give order to our lives. Like metaphors, myths are necessary for making sense of what goes on around us. All cultures have myths and people cannot function without myth any



more than they can function without metaphor. (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 185-86)

In rejecting objectivism and subjectivity Lakoff & Johnson give a key role to what they call “poetic imagination” (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 193) which also employs an “imaginative rationality” (ibid.) They believe the dialectical myths of objectivism and subjectivism reflect genuine aspects of the human need to understand our external and internal worlds but they should be integrated into an experientialist myth which affirms the embodied and contextual nature of human knowledge. Thus:

the nature of our bodies and our physical and cultural environments imposes structure on our experience, in terms of natural dimensions. Such gestalts define coherence in our experience. We understand our experience directly when we see it being structured coherently in terms of gestalts that have emerged directly from interaction with and in our environment. (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 230)

Mark Johnson has developed some of these ideas further, especially with respect to the body of arguing that the embodied nature of human ‘being’ provides many of the imaginative structures of human understanding (Johnson 1987). He begins by making what he calls “three controversial claims” which he then sets out to elaborate and defend. These claims are “Without imagination, nothing in the world could be meaningful. Without imagination, we could never make sense of our experience. Without imagination, we could never reason toward knowledge of reality.” (Johnson 1987: ix) He argues that the reason for the marginalisation of imagination is the triumph of an Objectivist philosophy. However, on the basis of a critique of this foundationalist view of knowledge which draws on the work of Hilary Putnam, he contends “any adequate account of meaning and rationality *must give a central place to embodied and imaginative structures of understanding* by which we grasp our world.” (Johnson 1987: xiii – my italics) The particular focus of our imaginative structuring of understanding is human bodily experience. He believes that “human bodily movement, manipulation of objects, and perceptual interactions involve recurring patterns without which our experience would be chaotic and incomprehensible.” (Johnson 1987: xix) These patterns Johnson calls “image

schemata” and they are “gestalt structures” since the forms they make are unified wholes. An important part in the development of these image schemata is played by metaphor which Johnson does not see as “merely a figure of speech” but as “a pervasive, indispensable structure of human understanding by means of which we figuratively comprehend our world.” (Johnson 1987: xx) His ideas are also set out in response to the dominant place that Cartesian and Kantian thought has in western philosophy, especially in respect of the dichotomy between mind and body. Johnson seeks to re-integrate the two by “putting the mind back into the body” (Johnson 1987: xxxvi) which stresses the “nonpropositional, experiential, and figurative dimensions of meaning and rationality.” (Johnson 1987: xxxvii)

Thus, bodily experience *precedes* propositional understanding. A vital component in this move towards sensemaking is the process of reasoning through metaphors and other figurative structures, which are not a matter of individual choice and application but are part of a public and shared preconceptual dimension of meaning. In this experiential context he defines metaphor as “a process by which we understand and structure one domain of experience in terms of another domain *of a different kind*.” (Johnson 1987: 15 – author’s italics) While his understanding of schema is based on Kant’s notion of schemata as nonpropositional structures of imagination which “have a reality as structures or patterns of mental representations” (Johnson 1987: 24) that raise them above the specificity of particular rich images. For Johnson himself, imagination exercises productive, reproductive, schematising and creative functions while its components include categorization, schemata, metaphorical projections, metonymy and narrative structure. This latter element highlights the fact that structures of rationality are shared by communities and “Not only are we born into complex communal narratives, we also experience, understand, and order our lives as stories that we are living out. Whatever human rationality consists in, it is certainly tied up with narrative structure and the quest for narrative unity.” (Johnson 1987: 171-72)

This approach to metaphor, gestalt and human sociality is fundamental to the approach that I take in this thesis. I shall follow Johnson in three important respects:

1. Bodily experience precedes propositional understanding

2. Metaphor structures the social patterns of our lived worlds
3. Our personal contexts and human rationality exist in complex communal narratives

Interestingly, although he does not draw specifically on Johnson's work, the theologian Peter Hodgson has applied a similar notion of embodied gestalt to Christianity and to an understanding of Jesus and the Church he argues that:

The ecclesial community is the "body" of Christ – the gestalt by which the love-in-freedom proclaimed and enacted by Jesus becomes intersubjectively efficacious in the ongoing history of the Christian faith. The ecclesial gestalt is never adequately embodied in an empirical church or Christian group; it is rather a critical, productive paradigm of praxis by which the empirical churches are continually judged and transformed (Hodgson 1994: 255)

I shall explore Johnson's ideas about embodiment further in Section 1 **(1.4.1)** as well as Hodgson's claims about his notions of ecclesial gestalt **(1.4.2)**.

### **(c) Conversation**

Talk and conversation have a fundamental role in organizations. Talk has been described as:

A large part of most people's lives, and in particular, the main part of what managers do. Studies of managerial life by people like Mintzberg and Stewart show that the great part of managerial activity is conducted through talk. (Sims, Fineman & Gabriel 1993: 300)<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Robert J. Marshak has a similar observation: "talk is one, if not the primary means of socially constructing reality; privileging some stories, narratives or accounts of that reality over others; and generating alternative conceptions of both proper questions and their answers. Put simply, the real action is in the talk" (Marshak 1998: 16)

Indeed Weick sees conversation as the *principal* ingredient in his recipe for sensemaking. Thus, he argues, an organization essentially “enacts raw talk, the talk is view retrospectively, sense is made of it, and this sense is then stored as knowledge in the retention process. The aim of each process has been to reduce equivocality and to get some idea of what has occurred” (Weick 1979 [1969]: 134).<sup>8</sup> Although I agree with Weick that conversation is a vital component in organizational sensemaking, I would contend that this process in an organizational context should not *per se*, seek to reduce equivocality but might (conversely and legitimately) seek to enable many conversations to take place. In this respect the distinction which Brunsson makes between ‘action’ and ‘political’ organizations is significant (Brunsson 1989), since the main ‘output’ of political organizations is talk. I shall discuss his ideas in relation to high education chaplaincy in Section 2 (2.4).

Many factors prompted this research but three conversations stand out in particular. The first is a meeting I had with the then Archdeacon of Bath, the Venerable John Burgess, towards the end of my first academic year as University Chaplain. John was, in effect, my diocesan ‘line-manager’. I do not have a record of our actual conversation, because at the time I was not planning any research or keeping a research diary, but my memory of it is vivid because it set in train many of the events which followed. I said to John that after several months into my five-year contract as chaplain I was having difficulty in “getting a handle on the job”. My recollection is that his reply was along the lines of: this was only to be expected. He went on to say that a chaplaincy job was something you did for a few years before going back in a parish to do the real work of a priest. Interestingly, when I came to see the Diocesan Bishop four years later on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1993 about the possible two-year extension to my existing contract, my research diary (which I was keeping at that time about the events at Christ Church, detailed in Section 3) records that the bishop said much the same thing, but perhaps that was just a coincidence.

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<sup>8</sup> “The organizational environment consists of nothing more than talk, symbols, promises, lies, interest, attention, threats, agreements, expectations, memories, rumours, indicators, supporters, detractors, faith suspicion, trust, appearances, loyalties and commitments” (Weick 1995: 41)

The thing which sticks in my mind about that conversation with John is the feeling of shock at, what I felt was, the lack of vision in the diocese for my new post. In my naïveté I expected to be sent back to the University from that meeting enthused and invigorated. I was clear in my mind that I was not going to spend four years working at a job that was viewed as pointless. Hence the title for the section on my experience as University Chaplain is “No Handle? No Doors? Searching for the University Chaplain”.

The second conversation was with Dr Douglas Peters who was lay chairman of the Bath Deanery Synod. I phoned him in the spring of 1992 to make an appointment for a research interview. In the course of our brief conversation he said, “Ah, you want to come round and talk about our congregational church. Of course, you realise that Christ Church isn’t part of the Church of England.” I then went to speak to him with a great sense of foreboding, fearing that as a member not only of the deanery and diocesan synods but also the Church of England’s General Synod he would have some strongly critical words to say about the existence of Christ Church. To my surprise and my relief, the only critical words he had were for the way Christ Church had been treated by the Diocese of Bath and Wells. Nevertheless, he was quite clear in his view that Christ Church was not part of the Church of England but there should still be space for it in the Church’s synodical structures. I found Douglas Peter’s approach of finding space for an anomaly rather than squeezing it into a pre-defined shape helpful in my thinking about many aspects of this story. In other words, there could be a place for such irregularity even though it might not be ‘part’ of the organization. Consequently my title for the section on Christ Church is “A Part or Apart? Searching for Christ Church”.

Finally, the third conversation came at the start of the research and was a rather traditional discussion with my supervisor, Iain Mangham, about the nature of being which could be ascribed to the word ‘table’. This set in train a period of deliberation on the epistemological basis for this thesis, which can now be read in Section 1 and is entitled “Looking Under the Table? Searching for an Epistemology”. Graham Ward has used the same piece of furniture to frame his discussion of realist and anti-realist philosophy. Thus, to understand the statement ‘This is a table’ requires a context for such understanding, since:

no sentence has meaning outside of context – and then the question must be asked: where does context begin and end? To what extent is there a difference between text and context? Another way of asking this question would be to ask: where does the requirement for supplementary information stop? (Ward 1997: 151)

Understanding sentences such as ‘This is a chaplaincy’, ‘This is an Anglican church’ or ‘This is my concept of embodied dialectic’ requires a similar contextual approach and what follows will provide the context in which these ideas developed. Many other conversations will play an important part in what follows – conversations that are epistemological, organizational, historical, ecclesial, sociological, educational, personal and more. The context for this is Gadamer’s idealised view that conversation represents the only non-manipulatory means of apprehending truth (referred to in Thiselton 1995: 70) and the perspective advanced by Weick and others that organizations exist through conversation. However, I would not entirely agree on the non-manipulatory nature of conversation since conversations are in themselves often an expression of a will to power. Nevertheless it is a fundamental part of my research methodology that the (dialectical) process of dialogue remains the most important means of providing a critique to those aspects of Nietzsche’s *will to power* which are present in all narratives. In this respect, what follows can be seen as a critical record of a whole series of conversations which took place while I was University Chaplain.

In his discussion of history, science and personhood in a contemporary, postmodern context the theologian Anthony Thiselton has drawn a parallel between *textual* and *personal* hermeneutics, which he illustrates with the analogy of a General Medical Practitioner’s consulting room. As patients we enter a GP’s surgery and tell our stories which the doctor recognises as a combination of two sets of factors. First, most stories fit general patterns which have been described in medical text books; second, there will be personal nuances and interpretative glosses some of which may be irrelevant or – conversely – of the utmost importance. An important element in this process is the listening done by the doctor, which leads to dialogue and interpretation (diagnosis) of systems.

This may continue until it reaches what Schleiermacher, Fuchs, and especially Gadamer call ‘shared understanding’ or ‘full rapport’.  
(Thiselton 1995: 55)

In applying Thiselton’s analogy to my thesis, what follows in Section 1 can be seen as my engagement with the general patterns which are found in the ‘text books’; whereas Sections 2 and 3 will deal more with my personal narratives and ‘interpretative glosses’. Section 4 returns to ‘text books’ to explore patterns of embodiment in the New Testament and my overall aim is to progress eventually to a ‘shared understanding’ in the conclusion (Section 5).

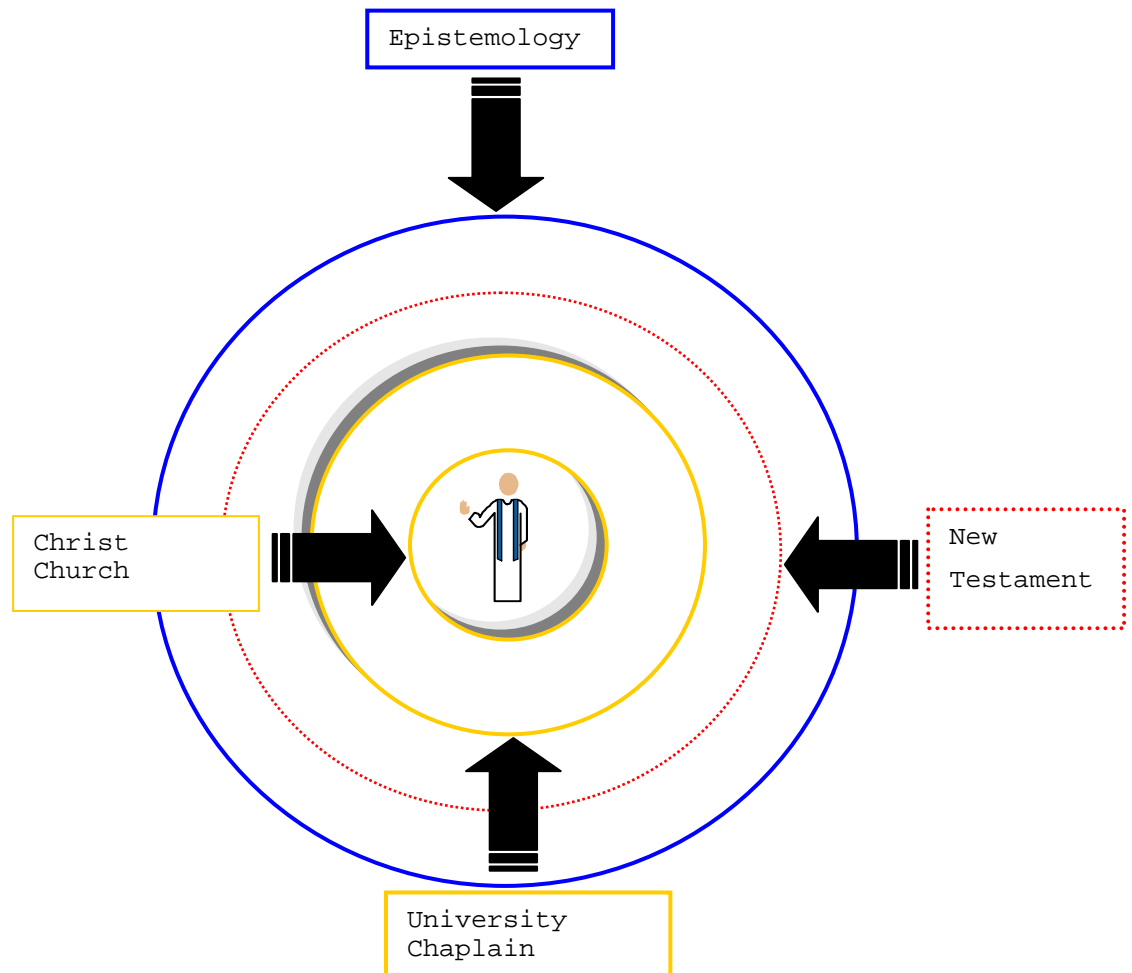
One final point to be noted under the heading of conversation, the theologian David Tracy has pointed out how conversation is a vital characteristic of an embodied approach to epistemology. He argues that we reason discursively, we inquire, we converse, we argue. Thus, “we are human beings, not angels” (Tracy 1987: 27). He goes on to suggest that the medieval portrayal of angels seems much like the disembodied Cartesian cogito:

But we human must reason discursively, inquire communally, converse and argue with ourselves and one another. Human knowledge could be other than it is. But this is the way it is: embodied, communal, finite, discursive. Transcendental arguments on argument can play a limited but real role in analyzing certain necessary conditions for the contingent reality of human discursive communication. (Tracy 1987: 27)

In other words, Tracy sets out a similar ontological dialectic to Thiselton – Thiselton’s is framed in a GP’s consulting room between the theoretical world of medical texts and the embodied world of patients; whereas for Tracy the interaction takes place between the transcendental nature of epistemology and the embodied experience of being human. A similar, embodied and conversational approach will be adopted in this thesis as I seek to explore in detail the “contingent reality” of being an Anglican priest in two organizational anomalies – Christ Church and the Chaplaincy Centre.

## 4. Outline of This Sensemaking Narrative

Earlier in this section I outlined my plan for this thesis on the basis of an embodied contextual cogito within four hermeneutical circles of my lived experience. By way of an introduction to the main narrative, I shall explore these circles in more detail.



### Section 1: ‘Looking under the Table’ Conversations about Epistemology

Starting from the ontological discussion about the status of tables I will trace a path through the origins of modernity in Descartes and Kant through the theistic thinking of Schleiermacher, Hegel and Kierkegaard and the atheistic approaches of Marx, Nietzsche and Freud. Descartes is important for my narrative because he is often identified as the thinker in whom the division between body and mind, so characteristic of Positivism, had its origin. By contrast, I shall set out later in Section 1 (1.4 and 1.5) an embodied basis to my epistemology, which will form the basis for my understanding of the Church as an embodied gestalt. Kant’s foundational



significance for Enlightenment ideas is profound and his separation of the moral world from the material had implications that were equal to, if not more far-reaching than, the dichotomy established by Descartes. Again it has been characteristic of the scientific outlook developed under Positivism to distance itself from ethical considerations. The effects of this have been to marginalise those forms of discourse which have tried to hold together the moral and the material, including most forms of religious reflection.

The responses to Cartesian and Kantian ideas have been many and varied. Schleiermacher is widely seen as the founder of contemporary hermeneutics and of phenomenology. He too established a dichotomy, this time between spiritual feeling and religious function, which established religion as an object for study, independent from an individual's personal beliefs and faith community. The narrative ontology that I shall be following will reject all three of these dichotomies, arguing that body and mind; the moral world and the material world; belief and context; cannot be split off from one another. The best way to explore them is through the communal narratives in which they are inextricably embedded. By contrast, the dichotomy established by Hegel between thesis and antithesis (which is subsequently resolved in a new synthesis) will play an important part in subsequent sections. I shall argue that an essential aspect of an embodied organization is that it is dialectical in nature and this characteristic should be affirmed and acknowledged rather than 'resolved'. Finally, from the theistic responses to Descartes and Kant, an important philosophical challenge to what might be called modern science came in the ideas of the Danish thinker Kierkegaard. He sought to overturn the notion that everything is causally determined and can be viewed by disinterested observers. Kierkegaard's existential understanding of 'self' has also played an important role in the development of phenomenology and, through that, a significant part of this thesis.

The "masters of suspicion" – Marx, Nietzsche and Freud – have all made a major contribution to post-Enlightenment thinking and the undermining of the Cartesian cogito. In their metanarratives, the self-conscious 'self' is seen as a product of economic and historical happenstance (Marx); the will to power (Nietzsche) or our repressed desires (Freud). Strangely, although over a period of time the all-seeing,

all-knowing Cartesian cogito is on the point of disappearing, the scientific and technological methods of which this cogito was a *pre*-requisite seems set to continue.

Some recent critiques of Positivism have been mounted from within the scientific community through the work of thinkers like Popper, Polanyi, Kuhn and Bohm and I shall consider their ideas briefly, particularly Thomas Kuhn's theories about paradigm shifts of thought which have also had an impact on the world of religion and been taken up and developed in a theological context by Hans Küng (1.2.5).

In rejecting a Positivist framework for this research, I shall instead take a phenomenological approach, which has its roots in the ideas of Schleiermacher, Otto and Husserl. More recent proponents of such a perspective are people like Alfred Schutz and Peter Berger, sociologists who stress the importance of locating human activity and sensemaking in the world of lived experience. It is through this frame that I approach Sections 2 and 3 which recount my lived experience as University Chaplain at the University of Bath and Officiating Minister at Christ Church. In addition, the work of Paul Ricoeur on the nature of narrative, hermeneutics and metaphor has been particularly important in my own organizational sensemaking. In the process of coming to an understanding of the Chaplaincy and Christ Church, Ricoeur's views on 'self' being understood through 'other' have been central and I have sought to apply this perspective to the organizational narrative in which I have been immersed. Indeed, this dialectical notion of 'self' and 'not-self' (s/~s) seems to be at the heart of the understanding of metaphor set out earlier in the thinking of Soskice, Lakoff and Johnson.

Finally, under the heading of epistemology I shall examine some of the emerging, embodied approaches to human sociality from the writing of Bryan S. Turner, John O'Neill, Philip A Mellor, Chris Shilling and Mark Johnson. Although they present a variety of different views in respect of the body as a social metaphor, they are all agreed that human embodiment has been a neglected aspect of our understanding of human 'being'. As has already been noted, one theologian who has shown a concern for the body as a metaphor for sensemaking within the Church is Peter Hodgson. I shall conclude my section on epistemology by critiquing his approach and setting out my own understanding of an embodied hermeneutic for the Church as an

organization. This approach is both an outcome of my research and the frame through which the sensemaking narrative is viewed retrospectively.

## **Section 2: ‘No Handles? No Doors?’ – Conversations about the Chaplaincy**

This is the first experiential narratives in this thesis. It is an account of some events from my time as University Chaplaincy from 1989 to 1996. Although it describes experiences prior to my conversation with the Archdeacon of Bath, it provides some of the organizational background to that conversation and the decision to establish an Anglican link for the Chaplaincy with Christ Church. I shall begin by relating to some of my first efforts at sensemaking in the role of an Anglican priest. This was in the context of being a curate in a large training parish, St. Thomas-on-the-Bourne, in the Diocese of Guildford. In some ways this situation was very different from that which I encountered at Bath. Yet in other senses, there were strong similarities, not least, with the confusion over job titles in both roles. One of the important elements from this experience which I took onto the sensemaking process in Bath was the rough organizational sketch of the Church as a body. I outlined some of my early thoughts on this matter in an article that reflected on my world of lived experience within the parish of St. Thomas’s and attempted to understand the organizational plurality which I encountered. (Roberts 1989 and Appendix 2).

This section sets out my early experience in sequential fashion. I will discuss: (i) my experiences in the role of curate in a parish and some of my initial responses to the new post of University Chaplain (2.2); (ii) a more extended process of reflection as I sought to explore how the initial specification which came with the job, some research into the role of a chaplain in higher education (B. Morgan 1986) and some of my lived experience linked up (2.3); (iii) how the early experience of helping to organise a mission by all the groups related to the Chaplaincy Centre framed some of the key decisions that I made subsequently, particularly the link with Christ Church (2.4) I shall return to some of my later experience at the University in Section 5 to examine how the metaphor of the body shaped later organizational developments at the Chaplaincy Centre (5.3.2)

### **Section 3: ‘A Part or Apart?’ – Conversations about Christ Church**

This is the second of my experiential narratives concerning an organizational anomaly in the Church of England. It explores in detail how Christ Church’s irregular place within the organization of the Church of England has shaped its ministry. When I arrived at Bath there was already strong, though informal, links between the University and Christ Church through the four members of staff who worshipped there – Professor Clifford Burrows (School of Mechanical Engineering), Professor Bernard Silverman (School of Mathematical Sciences), Dr David Sims (School of Management) and Cyril Selmes (School of Education). Cliff Burrows was also on the staff team at Christ Church as a Non-Stipendiary Anglican priest and David Sims was the organist and choirmaster.

At one level, the story of Christ Church as an organizational anomaly is the same as the Chaplaincy Centre’s – it is a story of ongoing, collective organizational sensemaking. In other respects, however, it is very different. During my time at Bath the University celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, whereas Christ Church was coming up for its bicentenary having been opened in 1898. Alongside Christ Church’s lengthier history as an irregularity, there was a recurring dream within some parts of the congregation that Christ Church could be a church like all the other churches within the Church of England, i.e. it would have its own parish. The significance of this organizational framework for the Church of England as a whole is identified in Section 2 in respect of higher education chaplaincies. An important part of my sensemaking narrative is my use of the body metaphor to provide a frame for understanding the role of the Chaplaincy Centre. In some ways, it seems to have been more acceptable to the diocese for the Chaplaincy to be outside the recognised structure, since there was little expectation that a chaplaincy would ever join the parochial system. However, the parish structure has a more acute role in Section 3 because it was anticipated by some in the diocese and some in Christ Church that this was the ultimate aspiration for the church from an organizational point of view. Yet there were also those on both sides who saw the need to provide Christ Church with a place within the parochial organization of the Church of England as much less of a priority. Indeed, a number of alternatives had been proposed in recent years and I shall consider these in **3.3**, because they form a significant part of the church’s self-identity in terms of Weickian sensemaking.

Not long after the Chaplaincy's Anglican link with Christ Church began in October 1990 the Diocese of Bath & Wells seems to have started in earnest to explore the possibility of placing Christ Church into a team scheme with the Parish of Walcot, in which it was situated. A major difficulty arising from this idea was that Walcot stands firmly in the evangelical tradition of Anglicanism while Christ Church is much more 'middle-of-the-road' or 'liberal catholic'. The resulting 'fall-out' from this proposal was heated, painful and acrimonious for most concerned and led directly to the resignation of the Revd Marcus Braybrooke as Officiating Minister at Christ Church in December 1991. At the start of this process I was on the staff team at the church and from January 1992 I took on many of the responsibilities of Officiating Minister. I had already begun this thesis with the University of Bath's School of Management as a means of exploring the nature of Christ Church as an organizational anomaly. By taking on the role of Officiating Minister my research focus changed from being a sensemaking narrative about *Christ Church* to be a sensemaking narrative of *my experience* as University Chaplain and Officiating Minister. This section is the one that most clearly reflects that methodological shift because it still attempts to maintain this dual research focus.

Thus, my sensemaking narrative for Christ Church sets out to achieve a number of things. First, it aims to recount the events surrounding the proposals for a team scheme for the Parish of Walcot (3.2). Second, it identifies some of the previous efforts to 'solve' the organizational conundrum posed by Christ Church. These include the plan in the late 1980's to link Christ Church with a chaplaincy at St. Mark's School (the Anglican comprehensive school in Bath) and the *People's Ministry* which was developed by Marcus Braybrooke during his time at Christ Church and played a significant part in the team scheme discussions (3.3). Third, I outline the historical material which formed the basis for my understanding of Christ Church and its ministry. This involves the 'lost story' of Christ Church and their *many* failed attempts to find a place within the parochial structure of the Church of England (3.4). It was this narrative which convinced me that seeking a parochial solution to Christ Church's organizational concerns was fundamentally flawed as a process and futile as an exercise. It was this story of the repeated failure being able to secure a parish which was an important factor in prompting me to go on and explore

further the notion of Christ Church as the Anglican link church for the Chaplaincy Centre. One of the practical ways in which the link with Christ Church was ‘embodied’ (3.5). This section concludes by returning to Peter Hodgson’s theological notion of the “inconvenience specificity” of Christ, which is also considered in my discussion of embodiment in Section 1. A key element in any understanding regarding concepts of embodiment must be the social context in which a body exists. Indeed, that is the framework for much of this study but, paradoxically, Christianity is predicated on a missing body – that of Jesus of Nazareth. An important but much neglected contextual hermeneutic circle in discussions about the nature of the Church’s ministry is that of Jesus and the early Church.

#### **Section 4: Conversations about the Origins of the Church**

Having examined in detail the outermost of my four contextual hermeneutic circles (epistemology) and the two innermost circles (my involvement at Christ Church, Bath and the University of Bath Chaplaincy Centre), I shall then turn my attention to the final circle from **Figure 1a** – that of the role of the body metaphor in early Christianity. The question could justifiably be asked: why address this question? My response is three-fold. First, any understanding of contextual cogito or hermeneutic of self must involve a significant degree of historical reflection. That will be a *sine qua non* for my epistemological discussions in Section 1, my sensemaking narrative as a chaplain in higher education in Section 2 and for understanding the role and nature of Christ Church outlined in Section 3. Second, this historical period is part of my own hermeneutics of ‘self’. The field of New Testament studies and, in particular, questions arising from studying the ‘Historical Jesus’ formed an important part of my previous degrees (Roberts 1982). I shall contend throughout this thesis that the hermeneutics of ‘self’ help shape the organizational hermeneutics in which that self (or selves) are involved. In some ways, my third point is a development of the first. Section 4 will draw attention to David Bosch’s assertion that:

the events at the origin of the Christian community – the “agenda” set by Jesus living, dying and rising from the dead – that basically and primarily established the distinctiveness of that community. (Bosch 1991: 22)

I shall argue that this agenda has been largely ignored by the reports into the organizational nature and structure of the Church of England and the approach I take in this thesis is a long overdue corrective to this tendency.

Furthermore, *the role that the body metaphor plays in the New Testament cannot be underestimated*. Its significance can be traced in terms of Jesus' own life and death, in respect of the subsequent experience by his followers of a bodily resurrection and in its widespread use in Pauline and other epistles as an organizational image for the diverse group which emerged after Jesus' death and eventually became known as the Church. To examine all this would be an extensive study in itself and I shall have to confine myself to two aspects. These will be: (i) the role of the body metaphor in Jesus' life and death and (ii) the place of the body in Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. Under the first heading, I shall outline a basic sketch of what I believe can be known about Jesus' life. Then I will argue that matters pertaining to the body, especially regarding food and ritual purity, are central to an understanding of Jesus' teaching and proclamation. Finally, I shall link that discussion with a consideration of Jesus death, which Jesus himself framed in terms of his body and his blood at the Last Supper. The issues raised under the second heading of Paul's First letter to the Corinthians will investigate more directly how the body metaphor was used to frame organizational perspectives in the early Church. I shall explore in detail whether Paul used the image of the body to constrain social change or to subvert the social order of Hellenistic society. In this respect two passages from 1 Corinthians will be particularly important, 1 Corinthians 11: 17-34 (Paul's discussion about the institution of the Lord's Supper) and 1 Corinthians 12: 12-31 (his use of the body metaphor to describe the Church). One of the key questions which arises from the latter passage focuses on the way in which Paul used this image. Was it a metaphor for the Church as: (i) a unified organization, (ii) a diverse organization, (iii) a contingent organization, or (iv) a dialectical organization? Each of these options has been canvassed and I shall discuss all these possibilities before concluding by commenting on my own understanding of the Church as an embodied dialectic.

## **Section 5: Conversations about the Church as an Embodied Organization**

The final section will examine some of the practical organizational implications for the body metaphor. I shall approach this in two ways. First, with respect to authority

in the Church (5.2) and, second, by exploring how my developed understanding of that metaphor shaped developments at the Chaplaincy Centre following the experiences set out in Sections 2 and 3 (5.3). As I have already stated, a key element in my sensemaking process is *narrative* and I shall argue that one of the five characteristics of an embodied organization is its *dialectical* nature. These two attributes are combined in Emery Roe's ideas about dialectical narratives in organizational discourse and social disputes. Thus, in the first part of my conclusion I shall explore how Emery Roe's concepts of story and counter-story can help understand and reframe the disagreement between Stephen Sykes and Richard Roberts over power in the Church of England. This discussion will relate directly to their use of the body metaphor.



**Figure 2: 'Alleluia' by George Lambourn**

The five-fold nature of the body as an organizational metaphor, which I elaborate in detail at the end of Section 1 can be applied to both the Chaplaincy Centre (5.3.2) and Christ Church (5.3.3). My understanding of the Church an embodied

gestalt means that it should be (i) biographic, (ii) relational, (iii) reflexive, (iv) dialectic and (v) contingent. In the terms of the Chaplaincy, this perspective is symbolised particularly by the changes in artwork during my time as University Chaplain. When I arrived in 1986 there were two pieces of artwork in the Worship Area – a small cross superimposed on a motif representing a dove or a tongue of flame and a very much larger picture which was specifically designed to represent disembodied human figures (**Figure 2**). I shall discuss in detail the various pieces of artwork which were added to the area between 1989 and 1996 but one of the last was a triptych whose central panel was a representation of the Last Supper (**Figure 3**).



This embroidered work by Jacquie Binns reflects several of the dialectically



**Figure 3: The centrepiece of the Last Supper in the ‘Wisdom of God’ triptych**

embodied themes developed in this study and I shall discuss them further in 5.3.2. There is no equivalent artistic parallel at Christ Church to encapsulate my understanding of the body metaphor in that context. However, alongside the dialectic of the body, which I had begun to develop as a curate at St. Thomas-on-the Bourne, stands the dialectical *narrative* of the two brothers, which I had also explored in an imaginative story-

form at that time (Roberts 1988 – reprinted in Appendix 1). A Girardian version of this story became an

important lens for viewing the ongoing saga of disagreement between Christ Church and Walcot Parish and I shall expand on that in more detail in 5.3.3.

## 5. Conclusion

I began this preface with Weick’s story of the three baseball umpires discussing their role of calling balls and strikes. The first one said, ‘I calls them as they is.’ The second one said, ‘I calls them as I sees them.’ The third said, ‘They ain’t nothin’ till I calls them.’ (Weick 1979 [1969]: 1) I have argued that sensemaking is a reflexive process upon regular patterns of human behaviour. This thesis will reflect on the organizational context and the two organizational anomalies in which I worked as an Anglican priest from 1989 to 1996. However, before turning directly to those contexts in Sections 2 and 4 I shall explore the widest of my contextual hermeneutical circles and address some fundamental questions of epistemology.



## Section 1:

### ‘Looking Under the Table’: Conversations about Epistemology

*Before man parted for this earthly strand,  
while yet upon the verge of heaven he stood,  
God put a heap of letters in his hand,  
And bade him make with them what he could ...*

From "Revolutions" by Matthew Arnold

## 1.1 Introduction

The human need to make sense of environment and experience has always been a fundamental part of our culture and history.<sup>1</sup> This is a record of my *epistemological* sensemaking journey prior to and following the conversation about the ontological status of tables referred to in my preface. As I indicated, it will frame much of the reflexive account which follows. At a wider, cultural level the human sensemaking process has changed and developed over time. For much of the post-Enlightenment period a positivist, scientific worldview has come to predominate in western society and shape what is known as 'modernity' (MacIntyre 1981; Milbank 1990; Thiselton 1992; Küng 1995). However, the birth of this body of knowledge had a long pregnancy and in what follows I shall begin by examining the genesis of modernity in the Cartesian cogito (1.2) before exploring its culmination in positivism (1.2.4) and some of the critiques of that approach (1.2.5). I shall argue that Phenomenology provides an alternative to positivism (1.3) before setting out the epistemological framework for this study (1.4) with particular reference to my understanding of the Church as an embodied organization. Thus, the shape of this section is as follows:

### 1.2 Epistemology and Modernity

#### 1.2.1 *Founders of Modernity*

(A) Rene Descartes (1591-1650)

(B) Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

#### 1.2.2 *Theistic Responses*

(A) Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834)

(B) Georg Hegel (1770-1831)

(C) Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855)

#### 1.2.3 *Atheistic Responses*

(A) Karl Marx (1818-1883)

(B) Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)

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<sup>1</sup> Although, by contrast, Kevin J. Vanhoozer has argued that "incredulity towards meaning" is a distinctive characteristic of postmodernity (Vanhoozer 1998).

(C) Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)

1.2.4 *The Emergence of Positivism*

1.2.5 *Critiques of Positivism*

### **1.3 Epistemology and a Phenomenological Framework**

1.3.1 *Introduction*

1.3.2 *Phenomenological Frameworks*

(A) Alfred Schutz (1899-1959)

(B) Peter Berger (b 1921)

(C) Paul Ricoeur (b 1913)

1.3.3 *Ricoeur & Dialectical Self*

### **1.4 Towards the Church as an Embodied Gestalt**

1.4.1 *Embodied Frameworks*

(A) Bryan S. Turner

(B) John O'Neill

(C) Philip A. Mellor & Chris Shilling

(D) Mark Johnson

1.4.2 *An Embodied Gestalt*

### **1.5 An Embodied Church**

1.5.1 *Summary*

1.5.2 *Conclusion: An Embodied Hermeneutic*

In the Preface I noted that the basis of this study would be a contextual cogito or an understanding of the sensemaking self located in lived experience. I also drew attention to the ontological dialectic, which had been identified in different ways by David Tracy (Tracy 1987) and Anthony Thiselton (Thiselton 1995). This dialectic between epistemological transcendence and embodied experience (Tracy) or the worlds of medical textbooks and embodied symptoms (Thiselton) forms the conversational framework of this section. In other words, this section will explore some of the wider philosophical background to this study and work towards a more

embodied context for the subsequent narrative.

## 1.2 Epistemology and Modernity

The question of when modernity began has provoked a plethora of answers: the 18th Industrial Revolution; the 17th Century scientific revolution; the Act of Toleration in 1689; the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century are just some of the suggestions. Others, as I noted in my Preface, have traced its roots as far back as Augustine (Lyotard 1984; Taylor 1989; Milbank 1990). Indeed John Milbank has argued that:

within Augustine's text we discover the *original* possibility of critique that marks western tradition, of which Enlightenment versions are, in certain respects, abridgements and foundationalist parodies. (Milbank 1990: 389)

The paradigm framed in the west by Augustine's Christian-Platonism was subsequently challenged in the 12th and 13th centuries by a rediscovery of Aristotle mediated through Islam (Abu-I-Walid ibn Rushd) and Judaism (Miamondes). The difference between Augustinian and Aristotelian modes of thought were fundamental (MacIntyre 1990; Brooke 1991) but a new paradigm was able to emerge through Aquinas's synthesis of the two systems of metaphysics in which natural objects could be studied (Aristotle) while at the same time being signs of God (Augustine). The ideas of Thomas Aquinas formed the basis of what Hans Kung has called the "Roman Catholic Paradigm of the Middle Ages" (Kung 1995) and that, in turn, faced a new threat from those who sought reform of the Church in the 16th century (Torrence 1969; Chadwick 1975; Thiselton 1992).

The connection between the Reformation and the emergence of modernity is subject to much discussion. Commenting on the changes that led to modernity and postmodernity, the sociologist David Lyon has argued that:

not only the Enlightenment, but before that also the Reformation tore holes in the unified cultural cosmos of the West. Having once split the symbolic canopy of medievalism, the way was open for further

fragmentation. (Lyon 1994: 71)<sup>2</sup>

The question of to what extent the Reformation was responsible for some of the characteristic traits of modernity is still keenly debated. Those 'modern' attributes include: science (Brooke 1991; Gellner 1992), capitalism (Weber 1904-5; Troeltsch 1991; Tawney 1926; Demant 1952; Preston 1979) democracy (Nicholls 1994 [1989]; Avis 1992), pluralism (Avis 1989; Markham 1994; Gunton 1993; Bruce 1995); voluntarism (Clark 1985; Milbank 1990); and secularization (Berger 1967; Chadwick 1975; Gilbert 1980; Wilson 1982; Hamilton 1995) but the fact that their history can be traced back to Augustine and beyond (MacIntyre 1981) illustrates how important it is to remain cautious about clearly marking one paradigm off from another. Providing a context for a contextual cogito is a difficult process, which I shall attempt through a consideration of some of the early founders of what is known as 'Modernity'. Although Modernity has come to have a reified existence, it is important to understand that it, too, is of a diverse and plurivocal character as parts **1.2.1 – 1.2.3** will attempt to demonstrate.

### **1.2.1 Founders of Modernity**

#### **A) Rene Descartes (1591-1650)**

According to John Macquarrie, Descartes has become a "whipping boy for Marxists, empiricists, existentialists and Christian theologians alike" (Macquarrie 1982: 40). In addition, Descartes has had the blame for the ills of modernity laid at his door by writers on ecology (Primavesi 1991), management (Guba & Lincoln 1985; Torbert 1991), social theory (Taylor 1989; MacIntyre 1988, 1990) and psychology (Heron 1992; Harre & Gillett 1994). So why is his thinking subjected to so much criticism? Descartes' aim was to seek knowledge of which we could be certain and, to achieve this, ideas must be subject to methodical or scientific doubt.<sup>3</sup> However, the

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<sup>2</sup> "Most of those features of our world which we think of as distinctly 'modern' have their origins in the Reformation" (Bruce 1995: 4).

<sup>3</sup> "What Descartes and his successors said, in effect, was that there are an awful lot of meanings and opinions about, they cannot all be right, and that we'd better find, and justify a yardstick which will sort out the sheep from the goats. For Descartes, the yardstick involved the use of *clear and distinct* meanings, so clear and distinct as to impose their authority on all minds sober and determined enough to heed them, irrespective of their culture." (Gellner 1992:38)

consequence of such doubt was that very little could withstand its onslaught. Against the background of an increasingly mechanistic view of the universe and humanity Descartes argued that there was only one thing that could withstand doubt and that was the fact that there was a being who was doubting, and *therefore* I exist. His conclusion was that the only thing he was sure of was that he exists and even if he doubts this he still knows he exist *Cogito, ergo sum* ('I think therefore I am'). God was introduced at a later stage, as the first thing that a thinking ego finds outside itself and this idea is unaccountable except on the assumption that God exists, but the crucial distinction has been made — individual consciousness is isolated from everything except the activity of logical reasoning. This division of mind and body; of rational and irrational; and the supremacy given the human reason was a crucial factor not only in Descartes' epistemology but that of Positivism.

Descartes' ideas have been enormously influential in western European thought. Charles Taylor has noted that he was deeply influenced by the mechanist reading of nature that he found in Galileo and that:

This scientific/epistemological motive stands out clearly. But it is also clear that he was moved by the ideal of disengaged rational control. Anthropological ideal and scientific theory collaborate, as they have throughout the modern culture of which Descartes is one of the founders. (Taylor 1994: 20)

In his discussion of Descartes' influence on contemporary hermeneutics Vanhoozer argues that Cartesian anthropology poses three problems: (i) How can we recover the mental intentions of the solitary cogito; (ii) Is there a role for social conventions and social theory in Cartesian atomism; (iii) Is language anything more than an instrument of thought with which knowing subjects name objects and manipulate thought (Vanhoozer 1998: 231). Crucially, Vanhoozer believes that Descartes has created a disembodied epistemology whereas as "Wittgenstein reminds us of the obvious fact that the foundation of mutual understanding is the human body, with its manifold responsiveness and expressiveness" – Vanhoozer quoting the philosopher of religion Fergus Kerr (Vanhoozer 1998: 231). The importance of an embodied and social epistemology will be developed below in my discussion of critiques of the Positivist ideology which emerged from Descartes proposals (**1.2.5**) and as I outline the significance of the body for this thesis (**1.3.1** and **1.4.1**).

The influence of Descartes has been exerted through many streams of thought. His ideas were taken up by John Locke in his work on how we come to know (*Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690)). Descartes argued that the process whereby human beings gain knowledge or come to know is based on sensations and reflections. The symbols flow through the sensations and are decoded in the mind by reflection. Thus the external world takes form in the mind. As we have seen, Descartes exploited the concept of innate ideas (to re-introduce the concept of God). Locke on the other hand saw the human mind as a blank sheet of paper which is only filled up by reference to sensation. Descartes and Locke 's mind/body dichotomies have been particularly influential in western education, psychology and perceptions of self,<sup>4</sup> yet all of these philosophical and scientific concepts need to be seen the context of the social, political and religious context of the time. For example, for Locke and Newton there was a renewed fear of "popery" and the prospect of a Catholic monarch (James II) and a consequent allegiance to a foreign power. In both Newton's science and Locke's philosophy the themes of God being revealed in the natural world and in a given set of laws as opposed to mystification or the authority of the Church could be said to have as much to do with the political climate as it does with intellect situation of the time (Brooke 1991: 159). Descartes' thinking is seen by some as a turning point for western thought, with his emphasis on the individual, "self-consciousness of spiritual substance whose essence is to think" (Heron 1992: 37). Thus, although Descartes sought to establish a de-contextualised cogito, it is clear with a sense of historical perspective that his ideas were shaped by his own embodied situation.

## **B) Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)**

Kant has been described as "a philosopher who stands out as a genuine innovator" (Warnock 1970: 4); his way of dealing with "hard" and "soft" facts has been described as "Canonical" (Rorty 1991: 83); while Colin Gunton has described his significance thus:

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<sup>4</sup> "The most influential for psychology of the great philosophers of the period, was, however, John Locke, who quite consciously models the mental world on the physical. As there are atoms, compounds and laws of motion in the external world, so in the world of the mind there are simple and complex ideas, and laws of the association of ideas. Locke thus gave rise to a tradition of Associationist Psychology that reigned for almost as long as the Newtonian physical science whose mental counterpart it was." (Cupitt 1985: 63)



perhaps the distinctive direction that modernity has taken in contrast to Greece is that in Immanuel Kant it found at once its leading Sophist and its Plato. To him is owed both a radical critique of the pretensions of reason, and its restoration on a new basis. (Gunton 1993: 114)<sup>5</sup>

Although Kant was a pioneer in philosophy his interest in how we know and how we ask questions also drew on his great interest in science. This led him to a series of questions such as: How is science possible at all? What are the consequences of our knowledge being confined to our senses? He argued that what our senses reveal are particulars, which led him to the further question of how was it possible to move from the particular to the general; from a given instance to a generalised law? In his view, empiricism *should* lead to complete scepticism.

In explaining the roles of reason and experience in the process of obtaining knowledge Kant isolated two key elements: (i) sensibility; and (ii) understanding. 'Sensibility' is our immediate contact with objects through our senses, while 'understanding' is to do with general concepts. The two processes are complimentary since we are supplied by a stream of material by the senses upon which our understanding imposes a pattern. Our minds are constructed in such a way that we apprehend our sensations in a pattern of space and time and we cannot help but do this. We are conscious that our sensations follow one another in a temporal pattern. According to Kant space and time are not subjective. I see a shape but it is an appearance or a phenomenon (i.e. the outside of the object). If we ask what object possesses these qualities the only answer is: we don't know. Kant calls it "the thing itself" but it is unknowable because although we can see appearances we cannot know what underlies them. The brain is fed by a large number of these sensations but this is not knowledge – it is *experience*. In order to obtain *knowledge* a pattern needs to be imposed on these experiences.

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<sup>5</sup> "Kant's project is the epitome of a rationalist ethics. He replaces divine reason with a universal reason, but he preserves the absolute and transcendent character of reason. He argues that morality cannot be based on God's will as the source of divine moral law, for that would reduce human freedom to a sham freedom to obey an 'other.' Yet he argues that morality *can* be based on a universal law which we rationally give to ourselves as an expression of what we most essentially are (namely, free *rational* creatures)." (Johnson 1993: 25) It is this rejection of 'other' which is, for me, a crucial flaw in the Kantian project – see **1.3.2**.

This is achieved, Kant argues, by *understanding* which is separate from the sensation. Understanding involves the use of what Kant calls *categories* or lists, of which there are twelve (including causality, substantiality, quantity). Once we are satisfied that we know the cause of something then our *unease* goes and we have *knowledge*. The understanding is continually linking up and making patterns and is not the result of the experience itself. Kant distinguishes between understanding and *reason*, creating a technical language of his own. Understanding has a restricted role to play (just organising the given materials of sensation) whereas reason is something far more inclusive. There is, he contends, something that insists on going on beyond organising things in patterns. Consequently reason is to do with that profound desire in humanity to discover a unity that will embrace all things — giving meaning to life.

Kant believed that there was a deep craving for seeing a pattern in which our whole existence could be interpreted and this role he assigns to reason. Reason deals with ideas and drives us to formulate three basic *ideas*: (i) Soul; (ii) Universe; (iii) God. The idea of the *Soul* provides us with the subjective point of unity; the all inclusive pattern that will make sense of all our experiences is found in the *Universe*, and it is *God* who ultimately guarantees all our experiences and makes them possible. These ideas refer to objects that cannot be known. We cannot observe our souls, rather it is our souls that do the observing. Nor can we feel or see the universe, because it is unknowable. As a result Kant argued that certain "sciences" were illusions and should be discarded (e.g. psychology and natural theology). Kant also rejected provable knowledge of God. Reason was simply inadequate for this task, which he believed to be a great gain for Christianity, making the doctrine of God safe for ever from the attacks of the logician. The link between God and science which had continued with Newton, Kepler, Galileo and others was severed by Kant. God was not knowable in the same way that human beings were, or the world was. God could not be probed or manipulated like an object of nature. God was the final guarantor of the divine moral law, taught by Christ, and that was the appropriate area of study for theology.

Science was now free to go its own way and proceed with the quantification of natural forces without colliding with matters to do with our beliefs, our ethics or our values. In the light of this it is ironic that Kant's *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens* (1755) has been credited as "the first modern theory of cosmic evolution" (Cupitt 1985: 3) because the start of the universe, its continued evolution and the

evolution of life on earth have continued the debates and discussions about natural theology despite Kant's attempt to emasculate the subject (Montefiore 1985; Davies 1983; Dawkins 1986; Hawking 1988; Polkinghorne 1991). Kant's separation of the physical world from the moral world has been something that western European thought has struggling to come to terms with for the past two hundred years with his further elaboration of a disembodied Cartesian cogito. The responses have been many and varied, and I shall examine three responses from what might be called a 'theistic' perspective (Schleiermacher, Hegel, Kierkegaard) and three responses from an 'atheistic' position (Marx, Nietzsche, Freud). The significance of this is three-fold: first, the ideas from all six thinkers have played an important part in shaping the intellectual background or context to this research; second they have all been conversation partners for me at different stages in my hermeneutics of 'self'; third, the dialectical relationship of other and not-other (o/~o) or, in this case, theism and not-theism (t/~t) is a key element in my understanding of the Church as an embodied organization (see 1.3.2).

### **1.2.2 Theistic Responses**

Perhaps the three most important thinkers to take up the challenge of Kant's ideas from a theistic perspective are: Schleiermacher, Hegel and Kierkegaard. For this study Schleiermacher is significant as a founder of the contemporary study of hermeneutics, Hegel is important in his use of dialectic and Kierkegaard for his work on 'self'.

#### **A) Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834)**

Schleiermacher was concerned with the apologetic intention to commend Christianity to his increasingly sceptical generation. Yet the 18th century was also a period of dynamic spiritual movements (e.g. the evangelical revivals, the growth of Methodism). Schleiermacher wanted to explore how this dynamic expression of faith could be brought into direct contact with the rationalism of the time. Many had followed Kant in commending Christianity as a bulwark of morality, but Schleiermacher was to focus on religious experience. Up to now Christianity had been thought of as a way of knowledge and that by means of revelation people have tried to know more about our reality and our morality. But, argued Schleiermacher, it is the scientist who tells us about the external world and, with regard to morality, the principles are best discovered by the use of reason as it is a sovereign realm in itself.

The question then posed by Schleiermacher was: Do we therefore have to conclude that there is no means whereby we can base the Christian faith?

His response was to contend that religion is not the product of reason and has nothing to do with will – it has its roots in *feeling*. It is a special feeling best understood as a human consciousness of the overwhelming presence of the eternal. Religion according to Schleiermacher has to do with the general rather than the particular; wholeness rather than the individual; the eternal rather than the temporal. It is not a matter of ideas or knowing but a matter of feeling, and that feeling is of utter dependence on the eternal. If a scientist collected all knowledge of the universe, proving God as creator that still has nothing to do with religion without a feeling of utter dependence on God. Schleiermacher based his thinking on 'religious' as opposed to 'Christian' feeling. In the end there was no way to differentiate the experiences. Religion he believed is only to be comprehended under the sum of all its forms, and all religions are an expression of the same religious experience. Schleiermacher continues to be an influential thinker for the late 20th century (Gerrish 1984; Sykes 1984: 81-101) and in his role in establishing the discipline of hermeneutics (Bleicher 1980; Tracy 1989: 36; Thiselton 1992: 204-236; Vanhoozer 1998: 25)<sup>6</sup> and the separation of religious feeling from explicitly religious functions that was to become an important part of a phenomenological approach to religions. I would argue that a separation of religious feeling from religious function is a version of the disembodied Cartesian cogito and that feeling and function need to be held together dialectically in an embodied understanding of the Church gestalt which I shall be outlining.

## **B) Georg Hegel (1770-1831)**

Kant's distinction between *appearances* and *things in themselves* (phenomena and noumena) was overturned by Hegel in his "Absolute Idealism" and he posited that things are nothing but appearances — not primarily to us, but things by which the universal divine idea reaches us. It is beyond appearances that the 'Absolute Idea' lies. One of Hegel's basic concepts is laid out in his preface to *The Philosophy of Right*

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<sup>6</sup> Curiously this centrality has been questioned in (of all subjects) theology. John Milbank argues that Schleiermacher's significance is due to the fact that he was the first thinker to define, "for modern times, a discreet theological domain and method. Yet from another perspective one might rather argue that Schleiermacher produced a diluted and compromised version of the themes of radical piety, one which was insufficiently critical of both Romanticism and rationalism" (Milbank 1999: 23).

(Hegel 1967) where he states that "The rational is real and the real is rational". What follows from this is that thought and reality are the same thing, in that, everything which exists is an *embodiment* of thought. Hegel goes further, arguing that everything is an embodiment of the 'divine' thought and that since everything is thought, we can unravel every mystery by our thoughts. In that respect, as I pointed out in the Preface, the events of everyday life or embodied experience are fundamental to human knowledge and critical reflection.

The implications of this line of thinking are far reaching. If the whole universe is set in motion according to the principles that we use everyday in our thinking process, as Hegel posited, then in order to trace the rules which govern the universe we need only see *how* we reason. This is true not only for the physical universe, he argued, but also the process of history is thought in motion – all being is thought realised and all becoming is a development of thought. Consequently, history develops according to the laws of logic and this was the foundation for Hegel's dialectical approach to the historical process whereby a *thesis* produces an *antithesis* ( $t/\sim t$ ) which subsequently merge to produce a *synthesis*. That, in turn, is the new thesis. The result is that reality can be full of contradictions, yet also fully rational, but all of this will reach its natural conclusion in a final great reconciliation with the *final idea*. Here we find the direct antecedent of the current scientific obsession with a TOE (Theory Of Everything). At another level, the impact of Hegel's ideas will be felt in this thesis through the work of Emery Roe (Roe 1994) and his concepts of story and counter-story in social and organizational conflict which will be discussed in Section 5 (5.3).

Hegel's thought is both complex and comprehensive. He argued that ultimately the absolute being/spirit found perfect self-knowledge in the minds of the philosophers and, therefore, philosophy affects every aspect of human culture. For Hegel religion was an attempt to convey, in symbolic and ritualistic form, the eternal truths. It is useful for those who cannot deal with philosophy as it deals with symbols, but one hopes that people may graduate from it eventually. In this respect, I shall side with Mark Johnson against Hegel in contending the way in which symbol and metaphor shapes human sociality is prior to philosophy and epistemology. The dialectic of history can be seen in religion as humanity develops from natural religion to the higher religions of individual spirituality. A fuller development is found in Christianity, which is the religion of truth and spirit. It is the last stage of religion

before you reach philosophy and finally confront reality. In an early attempt at deconstruction Hegel argues that religion provides a thesis (God) and an antithesis (Creation) and the doctrine of the Trinity is a clumsy, symbolic way to describe the divine producing its antithesis. Sin is the religious word for contradiction and, eventually, good and bad will be swallowed up in a richer synthesis. In contrast to Hegel, I shall argue throughout this study that 'contradiction' is far from being a 'sin', but is an essential characteristic of the Church as an embodied gestalt.

### **C) Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855)**

Kierkegaard's relatively short life is summed up by his tombstone which is inscribed with the words "That Individual" – entirely appropriate for the founding father of modern existentialism. Significantly his book *Either/Or* has been described by MacIntyre as "the epitaph of the Enlightenment's systematic attempt to discover a rational justification for morality" (MacIntyre 1981: 38). Kierkegaard's philosophy was strongly influenced by his religious beliefs, though he had a profound antipathy towards the Church, and his ideas have been taken up by theists and non-theists alike. All philosophy and all questions can only be approached from the standpoint of human existence or human 'being'. So, for example Kierkegaard distinguishes between the questions: 'What is a Christian?' and 'What does it mean to *be* a Christian?' For the first question all you need is a dictionary, but for the latter the only person who can answer is someone whose existence is a Christian existence. Existentialism is also imbued with a deeply held suspicion of the crowd. Kierkegaard's hatred of the mob has its roots in his own background, and also in his antipathy towards Hegel. It has been taken up by other existentialists (Heidegger's *Das Mann* and Sartre *Hell is other people*) and existential thought focuses on the individual and the choices that an individual makes in the process of self-realisation. This process of becoming cannot be known by reason. You cannot dissect a living being and discover the meaning of life. If you try you will only kill it! Ultimately for Kierkegaard, human existence is irrational and in the face of the irrational, the human decision is crucial. My decision brings about the transition from 'What I am' to 'What I shall be' and human existence is a free, spontaneous, inner act. The ego of today is the father of the ego of tomorrow. These ideas about the nature of 'self' relate back to Wesley Carr's methodological question framed in the Preface: 'What is happening to me and why?' (Carr 1985: 33). This thesis is existential in that it is a reflection,

through Carr's question, upon the transition of 'What I am' and 'What I shall be' as an Anglican priest in the specific organizational context of Christ Church and the Chaplaincy Centre. Furthermore, Kierkegaard wanted to free people from the illusion of objectivity and argued that humanity had lost the capacity for subjectivity and it is the task of philosophy to rediscover it for us. Objectivity according to Kierkegaard is that which is encapsulated in a set of rules or *an* explanation. He sets out to destroy the scientific myth that all is causally determined and that a complete account of everything could be discovered if we were thorough in our observations. It was a fallacy, Kierkegaard believed to think that this objectivity could be applied to all areas of human experience including the ethical and the religious. "Objectivity" is to accept the role of observer. Kierkegaard's critique of science and of being a passive observer is fundamental to my methodological approach of embodied reflexivity utilised in this thesis.

As an alternative Kierkegaard argues for subjective knowledge. This cannot be taught in the classroom or be investigated by researchers. It is essentially paradoxical and can therefore only be known through faith and it is known through the actual experience of living and not through abstractions. Again, this research project is Kierkegaardian in the sense that it is an account of my lived experience. Although I would not go as far as Kierkegaard in arguing that this is the *true* history of humanity and the history of the scientific historian is a *false* history. The two are complementary or dialectical. In that respect Kierkegaard remains an important corrective to what Mark Johnson calls 'objectivism' when he argues that real history is the story of those qualitative leaps within. Thus, the individual is his or her own project. For any person, the passionate object of existence is oneself and one's own existence is the result of continuous reflection on the self – in Kierkegaard's words: "Be what you become, don't be what you are". Meaning, truth and revelation become irrational and subjective. They are acts of will. David F. Ford provides a helpful sketch of Kierkegaard's rejection of Hegel and his advocacy of Christian subjectivity: "We live life forwards, with no neutral or overarching standpoints. We are faced with decisions and have to choose without any guarantees that we are right. We are constituted by such decisions and though they become different in ourselves" (Ford 1997: 10). Although it is important to recall, in line with Weick, that the process of sensemaking itself is retrospective.

From the point of view of Christianity, it would be a grave mistake to think of Christian doctrine as something that was objectively true. For Kierkegaard, the central paradox of Christianity is the Incarnation where the eternal creator came into existence at a particular time and place. This paradox is an absurdity, which cannot be made objectively acceptable, but can only be known subjectively – the ultimate "act of will". As human beings we are now free to decide how to live. All the external supports of civilisation (morality, law, institutional religion, learning) are taken away and we are left as self-governing beings who can create and discover for ourselves. Kierkegaard's thinking has played a significant role in Christianity, through people like Rudolph Bultmann in his studies of the New Testament and Paul Tillich in his theology. Existentialism has also played a key part in western thinking during this century. Like Hegel, people have used Kierkegaard's ideas as a starting point for their own, and have often purged the theistic base that originally undergird his arguments. Kierkegaard was a significant influence in the development of Phenomenology (see below **1.3.1**). In addition his vision of human 'being' as involving the "self-choosing infinite self" (Taylor 1989: 450) makes an important contribution to the notion of the contextual cogito which shapes this study. However, a key difference will be that my understanding of 'self' (**1.3.2**) will not be as independent and autonomous as Kierkegaard's because there will be an irreducible role for the 'other'.

### **1.2.3 Atheistic Responses**

The conversation with Iain Mangham which has framed this section, regarding the ontological status of tables, included a reference to Graham Ward's discussion of the enormous table which resided in the Lightfoot Room of the Divinity Faculty at Cambridge (Ward 1997a). It was around this table, during my training for the priesthood, that I was introduced to the "masters of suspicion" – Marx, Nietzsche and Freud. They too, have written important 'textbooks' (to continue Thiselton's analogy of the GP surgery) for both an organizational and personal hermeneutic. Furthermore, not only have they provided critiques of Christianity from their different perspectives, they have also challenged the basis of the Cartesian Cogito as an autonomous, reflexive self. In the same way that the various Medieval notions of an all powerful 'God' were deconstructed by the Enlightenment, so the Enlightenment's all powerful notions of 'self' have been deconstructed by Marx, Nietzsche and Freud.



#### **A) Karl Marx (1818-1883)**

Marx was descended from a long line of rabbis, he was baptised into the Church at the age of six and was a convinced Hegelian at University but, despite this strong theistic start to life, his thinking has been very influential in the many atheistic philosophical, social and political streams of thought that have followed subsequently. Marx's father was a pragmatic Jew who worked in the Prussian civil service. His baptism and that of his children was probably due more to social needs than religious conviction. At university in Berlin, Marx was influenced by Hegelian thought which still placed philosophy within the strongly theological context of Christianity being the highest form of religion because it represented true philosophy in pictorial form. Although this question, and other issues, framed by the Hegelian project were matters for debate, that debate was still undertaken in the framework of theology, though it was theology of a very radical nature. Marx's move from radical Hegelian philosophy/theology to atheism was made particularly under the influence of the theologian Bruno Bauer in whose circle he mixed at Bonn (McLellan 1987) and from Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity* published in 1841 (McLellan 1977; Harvey 1995). Marx wrote his doctorate on the difference between the atomic theories of Democritus and Epicurus in which he perceived a parallel between post-Aristotelian and post-Hegelian Philosophy (McLellan 1977; Kolakowski 1978 [1]), but his chances of an academic career received a blow when Bauer was removed from his theological post for his unorthodox views. Marx moved into journalism and also from putting politics and social theory into a religious context to putting religion into a political and social context. This hermeneutical inversion of theological and political frameworks is illustrated by Marx's own account of his editorial instructions for contributors to his newspaper *Rheinische Zeitung*.

I asked that religion should be criticized more within a critique of the political situation than the political situation within a critique of religion, because this approach fits better the nature of a newspaper and the education of the public, for religion has no content of its own and does not live from heaven but from earth, and falls automatically with dissolution

of the inverted reality whose theory it is. (Chadwick 1975: 54-55)<sup>7</sup>

During his time writing for the *Rheinische Zeitung* Marx broke with Bauer (see Marx's reviews of Bauer in McLellan 1977: 39-62). After the paper was suppressed by the increasingly conservative authorities in the summer of 1843 Marx moved to Paris in the autumn of that year, and it is from that time that his most well-known passage on religion dates:

The foundation of irreligious criticism is this: man makes religion, religion does not make man. Religion is indeed the self-consciousness and self-awareness of man who has either not yet attained to himself or has already lost himself again. But man is no abstract being squatting outside the world. Man is the world of man, the state, society. This state, this society, produces religion's inverted attitude towards the world, because they are an inverted world themselves. Religion is the general theory of this world, its encyclopaedic compendium, its logic in popular form, *its* spiritual *point d'honneur*, *its* enthusiasm, its moral sanction, its solemn complement, its universal basis for consolation and justification. It is the imaginary realisation of the human essence, because the human essence possesses no true reality. Thus, the struggle against religion is indirectly the struggle against the world whose spiritual aroma is religion.

Religious suffering is at the same time an expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the feeling of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless circumstances. It is the opium of the people. (McLellan 1977: 63-4)

In a footnote on this passage McLellan makes the comment "Marx's most famous

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<sup>7</sup> In a well-known passage from *The German Ideology* Marx elaborates on this inversion and provides an embodied basis to his thinking while, at the same appearing sceptical of narrative: "in all ideology men and their relations appear upside down as in a *camera obscura* In direct contrast to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven. That is to say, we do not set out from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at men in the flesh. We set out from real, active men, and on the basis of their real life-process we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process ... Life is not determined by consciousness, consciousness by life" (McLellan 1977: 164).

description of religion is also his least original" (McLellan 1987: 174 n 29). Indeed Feuerbach, Bauer and Hess had all used the analogy between religion and opium before (Chadwick 1975: 49). What is of more significance is that, by placing faith within an economic and social context, Marx is also laying the foundations for an understanding of 'self as contextual. The 'self is not the disembodied noumenon of Descartes or Kant but an embodied entity, which is irrevocably located in the world.

In *The German Ideology* published in 1844 Marx, together with Engels, outlined a clearer approach to religion. They make three points: (i) theology is a form of 'ideology', (ii) ideology in general, and theology in particular, reflect a seriously flawed division between the mental and the material; (iii) this division represents a correlation between the ruling class and ruling ideas. Theologians therefore are part of the ruling 'intellectual force' and their function within society stands revealed as both ideological and illusory while theology itself:

is regarded as epiphenomenal, socially determined, elitist, intellectualist and finally spurious. (Gill 1977: 8)

As Gill points out, this criticism of religion is based on moral grounds (i.e. theology springs from a morally indefensible background of privilege) not on empirical grounds as Marx and Engels suggest. However, Marx's comments on religion are intermittent and he does not make a sustained critique of the phenomenon nor of his thinking in this area. As the theologian Nicholas Lash has argued:

There are many good reasons – practical and theoretical, political and historical, ethical and metaphysical – for being an atheist in today's world. But the assumption that Marx's criticisms of religious belief and practice, and the philosophical 'naturalism' on which they in part depend, may be taken to have disposed of the question of God, is not among such good reasons. (Lash 1981: 286)

Marx's thought is, I believe, significant in the sphere of religion (and specifically for the development of the western history of religious thought) for three reasons. The first is that Marxian analysis has played a very significant part in the development of western European social thinking. Second, Marx was one of the key popularizers of Feuerbach's idea that religion is a human projection with the radical anthropocentrism which is concomitant with that and I shall comment on Feuerbach's curiously

disembodied understanding of Christianity in **1.4.1**. Third, by locating religion as a function of economics Marx begins the process of 're-embodiment' of the self. Leszek Kolakowski, one of the most significant commentators on Marx has made a four-point summary of the basis of Marx's ideas, which seem to me to be the outlines of a contextual cogito – especially in points 2 and 3:

1. *The human person is the only value – all others are instrumental and subordinate.*
2. *The person is always a live, finite, concrete entity.*
3. *There are permanent features of human nature which make it impossible for human being to live together in a harmonious community based on mutual love and respect for life.*
4. *The abolition of religion in the dogmatic and mystical forms in which it has hitherto been known will open the way to a new, authentic religion of humanity enabling human persons to attain what has been their true object in all religions, namely the satisfaction of their need for happiness, solidarity, equality, and freedom.* (Kolakowski 1978 [1]: 119)

However, if Marx underlines the need for *context* in terms of self and provided the basis for a contextual cogito, the ideas of Nietzsche and Freud provide a strong challenge to the notion that it is possible to speak of self or cogito at all.

## **B) Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)**

If Marx was the popularizer of Feuerbach's anthropocentric approach to religion, then the thinker who worked out the consequences of these ideas with greatest clarity and no little force was Nietzsche. In some ways Feuerbach is the missing link between the still predominantly theistic philosophy of Kant, Schleiermacher, Hegel and Kierkegaard and the much more sceptical thought that developed in the nineteenth century and is found especially in the devastating critique of religion (particularly Christianity) made by Nietzsche. As Alasdair MacIntyre has pointed out:

it was Nietzsche's historic achievement to understand more clearly than any other philosopher – certainly more clearly than his counterparts in Anglo-Saxon emotivism and continental existentialism – not only that what purported to be appeals to objectivity were in fact expressions of

subjective will, but also the nature of the problems that this posed for moral philosophy. (MacIntyre 1981: 107)

It has also been remarked that some of the most God-obsessed thinkers (e.g. Spinoza, Nietzsche, Altizer) are, at the same time, some of the strongest critics of traditional Jewish and Christian theism (Tracy 1981: 52). This is certainly true of Nietzsche, whose attacks on Christianity have changed the face of religious and philosophical thought. The analysis of religion has been transformed post-Nietzsche. He argued with profound intensity, and using powerful aphorisms, that western philosophy had come to the point where there could no longer be any metaphysical foundations. We as human beings pattern and interpret our own experience, existence and reality. There is no objective guarantee of moral and cosmic order, or of the Cartesian cogito. There is no God to 'wrap things up' neatly for us as individuals or as society. This is the message that Nietzsche brings in the guise of the madman in what is perhaps his most well known piece of writing:

Have you not heard of that madman who lit a lantern in the bright morning hours, ran into the market place, and cried incessantly: "I seek God! I seek God!" As many of those who did not believe in God were standing round just then, he provoked much laughter. Has he got lost? asked one. Did he lose his way like a child? asked another. Or is he hiding? Is he afraid of us? Has he gone on a voyage? Emigrated? Thus they yelled and laughed.

The madman jumped into their midst and pierced them with his eyes. "Whither is God?" he cried; "I will tell you: *we have killed him* – you and I. All of us are his murderers. But how could we do this? How could we drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What were we doing when we unchained the earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Away from all suns? Are we not plunging continually? Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there still any up or down? Are we not straying as though through an infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breath of empty space? Has it not become colder? Is not night continually closing in on us? Do we not need to light lanterns in the morning? Do we hear nothing as yet of the gravediggers who are burying God? Do we smell nothing as yet of the divine

decomposition? Gods, too, decompose. God is dead. God remains dead.

And we have killed him. (Nietzsche 1974: Section 125)

Clearly in the background is Feuerbach's understanding of religion as a projection of this-worldly human concerns onto the cosmos and into the divine story (Berger 1979: 121ff). Just as Marx saw religion as escape from reality, so Nietzsche perceived Christianity as a denial of how things really are. Yet, although God no longer guarantees our understanding of society or self, neither is science the great saviour, since that too is just another way for the individual to escape from knowing oneself:

Long live physics! – How many people know how to observe something?  
Of the few who do, how many observe themselves? "Everybody is  
farthest away – from himself"; all who try the reins know this to their  
chagrin. (Nietzsche 1974: section 335)<sup>8</sup>

In his rejection of religion and science as false gods, Nietzsche opened the chasm to nihilism (Blackham 1952: 40f; Cupitt 1982: 134ff) for both himself personally and for western culture generally. In reply to his own question, "What then is truth?" he stated that it was:

A mobile army of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms, a sum, in short, of human relationships which, rhetorically and poetically intensified, ornamented and transformed, come to be thought of, after long usage by a people, as fixed, binding, and canonical. Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions, worn-out metaphors now impotent to stir the senses, coins which have lost their faces and are considered now as metal rather than currency. (Quoted in MacIntyre 1990: 35)

In some respects Nietzsche can be seen as a radical successor to Kierkegaard with the central role that he gives to 'self' and his scorn for objectivism. This thesis and my understanding of a contextual cogito need to be seen within the ideas that those two philosophers have mapped out. It too, will take a critical view of scientific

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<sup>8</sup> H. J. Blackham describes Nietzsche's view of science thus: "Modern science ... was one of the many elaborate ways in which the modern individual took refuge from himself and sought to lose himself and dodge the decisive struggles of human destiny." There is a line of thought here which extends back through Kierkegaard to Augustine and forward to the lines from R. S. Thomas which were quoted at the start of my introduction *"The best journey to make is inward. It is the interior that calls."*

methodology and seek to locate my own sensemaking process within an understanding of how metaphor shapes not only 'self' but also human sociality and organization.

### **C) Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)**

Like Marx, Freud was born into a mid-European Jewish family that held lightly to their religious heritage or 'context'. Interestingly, while it is known that Marx and Nietzsche were baptised into the Church, it has always been assumed on the basis of Freud's own testimony that his own upbringing was relatively non-religious. However it has been argued that Freud may have been secretly baptised into the Catholic Church by his nanny before the family moved to Vienna in 1860 (Vitz 1988: 3-30). Whatever the likelihood of that being true, Vitz's other point does stand – in that, bearing in mind the importance Freud attached to the early years of childhood (e.g. Freud 1914: 41-8), it is surprising how little attention is given to Freud's *own* childhood (e.g. Wollheim 1971: 19 and Cupitt 1985: 74).

Freud was also influenced by Feuerbach's ideas of God *as* a human projection, but he went further describing religious ritual in terms of neurotic obsession. Belief in God, according to Freud, is the projection of fantasies of the omnipotent and menacing father while the conscience is the 'inner aggression' of the super-ego which, in turn, is the psychic mechanism that represses instinct. Just *as* neurosis in a person is the consequence of trauma and repression, where repressed memories of fear and guilt return in disguised forms, so religion has its origins in primal events that have produced traumatic guilt. In *Totem and Taboo* (Freud 1985: 43-224) Freud argues for a father-dominated 'primal horde' where sons ultimately slaughter the father in order to gain sexual access to the women of the group and eat his body. The primitive religious ritual of the meal where the totem animal is consumed is a recapitulation of that primal murder. The meal functions as both a celebration for the defeat of the father, but also expresses guilt and seeks reconciliation with the memory of the victim. An approach that is in some ways similar in style but very different in conclusion is that of Rene Girard, who argues in *Violence and the Sacred* (1977) and *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the Earth* (1987). He contends that primal violence in religion has its roots in our own violence, especially in our relationships to

those close to us,<sup>9</sup> and gives a key role to scapegoating as a social process. A Girardian reading of events outlined in Section 3 will form part of the conclusion to my narrative about Christ Church in **5.3.3 (iv)**.

Freud pursues his ideas further in *Moses and Monotheism* (Freud 1985: 237-386) where he uncovers a similar process to that described in *Totem and Taboo* in the origins of Judaism. According to Freud, Moses was an Egyptian devotee of the one universal god Aten who imposed monotheism on a group of Semitic tribesmen. Moses is murdered by the tribe, who copes with the subsequent guilt, by associating the Mosaic deity with a local volcano god. The heavenly projection of the 'threatening father' (the murdered Moses) makes it possible to forget the actual murder. The result of this process is that a generalised guilt is introduced into the tribe in place of Moses' death and the universal and ethical God of Moses is replaced by a localised, despotic deity who is characterised by vindictiveness and bloodlust. The religion of Moses is only rediscovered by the prophetic tradition of Judaism, but without removing the strong sense of guilt. For Freud, Pauline Christianity is a brilliant resolution of this primal guilt with the murder of a 'son' who represents both the primal father and the guilty children, while the totemic meal of the eucharist is a 'reconciliation with the father' by eating the murdered son.

It is perhaps no surprise that Freud's ideas in this respect have not won over many historians or biblical scholars, and yet Freud's explanation still has an intriguing descriptive power. What is taking place here? In the words of Rowan Williams:

Freud believes that he is giving explanations of a scientific and materialistic kind where in fact he is constructing imaginative frameworks of interpretation. Freudian theorists still disagree vigorously about the nature and possibility of 'explanation' in psychoanalysis, but recent decades have seen an increase in the number of those prepared to see analysis as a linguistic process, a conversation about possible meanings for the subject undergoing the analysis, a suggestion of viable stories to

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<sup>9</sup> Milbank notes Girard's debt to Freud, Frazer and Durkheim in his theory of mimetic rivalry. In Girard's metanarrative "we desire through imitation, we desire what others desire, and this is often complicated by a desire *for* others, for those whom we are trying to displace. Conflicts, therefore, are usually between 'doubles', and primitive peoples show logic in their horror of close similarities, whose danger is reflected in stories of competing twins, like Romulus and Remus." (Milbank 1990: 393)



tell about oneself in a way that opens up further growth. What is not being offered is scientific explanation: the Freudian theoretical structure is a therapeutic myth. (Williams 1983: 220)

In other words, Freud provides an ingenious mythology for a displaced cogito, while claiming an objectivity for that myth which is denied to other sensemaking narratives.

If we follow any of these lines of thought, it is important to be clear about where it leaves us in terms of asking questions about God, religion, self and society. While Freud set about demythologising faith, his methodology actually leads to a process of remythologising religion, whereby the present is recast in the narrative pattern of the past. This is inevitable and is one of the reasons why it is important to make such re-telling of the pasts explicit, for example, *as* in Section 4 of this thesis. The process started by Feuerbach cannot be reversed and there is always an irreducible element of the contextual cogito in such historical narratives. Nevertheless it is important to be open about such narratives so that they can be subjected to critique. Such a dynamic is an essential part of this study and I shall consider the matter further under the heading of the dialectical self (1.3.3). I have already noted some of the dichotomies in the accounts given by Descartes, Kant, Schleiermacher, Hegel and Kierkegaard. The theologian David Tracy argues that this is characteristic of such Metanarratives:

The stories let loose by the proclamations of Marx, Freud and Nietzsche on the illusions of reflective consciousness have not been without their own dialectics ... Each classic expression of the human spirit seems inevitably to produce its own dialectic into a story at once liberating and manipulative, healing and murderous, even *fascinans et tremendum*. (Tracy 1981: 351)

As I pointed out in my Preface, it is a mistake to believe that by committing epistemological fratricide knowledge has automatically been advanced. It seems to me that the process of knowing requires more than a form of ontological 'Cluedo' in which we work out who has murdered where, and with what instrument. Reflexive consciousness comes in a variety of forms and for the sake of this study I shall consider two: (i) Positivism (1.2.4 and 1.2.5); and (ii) Phenomenology (1.3).

#### **1.2.4 The Emergence of Positivism**

The modern era has been characterised by the sense of objectivity that natural

scientists have given to their observations of the universe. Thinkers in other fields have sought a similar foundationalist epistemology for such areas of thought as social sciences, religion and philosophy (Thiel 1994). The rise of the social sciences together with their positivist methodology is inextricably linked with the name of Auguste Comte 1798-1857 (Chadwick 1975; Cupitt 1985; Giddens 1993 [1976]; Flanagan 1996). As the sociologist Kieran Flanagan has put it: "Comte was one disciple of reason and humanity amongst many ranging from Feuerbach, Marx, Strauss, to Nietzsche and Freud who, to follow de Lubac, formed their own drama of atheist humanism." Which, in turn, led to "a tyranny and to a blindness which was exalted into a victory of the positivist age" (Flanagan 1996: 105).<sup>10</sup> Curiously, for someone who stood for an "end to mystery, and an end to mystification" (Giddens 1993 [1976]: 17), he has himself become something of a 'totem'. Not in the strict Freudian sense, but a symbol for the intellectual climate and hope of 19th century culture. The term 'positivism' was credited to the French socialist thinker Saint-Simon (1760-1825) but was popularised by his pupil Comte. Positivism believes that experimental science is the only way to truth. While Comte was not the originator of positivism, his role was in its development was crucial and he certainly attempted to make science and positivism the basis of life, society and religion. The natural sciences were widely held during the third quarter of the 19th century to be able to solve all problems, and that just as nature could be brought to heel by universal laws, so could human nature and society. Comte placed great emphasis on "a satisfactory encyclopaedic system" and "the principle of classification". As he wrote in 1829:

The general theory of classification has recently been established by the philosophic research of botanists and zoologists, and allows us to hope for real success in our task by offering us a sure guide in the true principle of classification for, like any other problem, it must be treated by observation and not by *a priori* considerations. By the positive method classification results from the study of objects to be classified, and is determined by the affinities indicated by their affiliation, so as to be itself the expression of the most general fact relating to these objects, and elucidated by the

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<sup>10</sup> Although a dissenting voice is Foucault who locates the origins of sociology and secularism in the "medicalisation of the body" by the medical profession in the 19th century (Turner 1991 [1983]: 131).

comparison in depth of the objects. (Andreski 1974: 43)<sup>11</sup>

Comte's ideas had many implications, but just to mention two. First, in some ways it provided a philosophy that stood against the social philosophies of thinkers like Hegel and Marx. For Comte and those who followed his line of thought, if you wanted to remake society, you did not begin with institutions or structures, but you began with a person's credo or with their beliefs. Reform people's philosophy and then you transform the institutions. Second, it provided a philosophy that was in close harmony with the scientific culture that had developed since the Enlightenment. The importance of the individual atom in the new scientific thinking replaced older more organic metaphors, as Brooke has pointed out:

The philosophical implications of the seventeenth century transformation were profound. A new conception emerged of what was real in the world. Particles of matter in motion defined the new reality. The world of appearances, of colours, odours, tastes was reduced to secondary status — as merely the effect of the interaction of particles on the human sensory apparatus. (Brooke 1991: 117)

This individualism was applied to human culture and society by Comte, John Stuart Mill and others. Even though there was by 1890 a perceived gap between this "act of faith" and human experience (Chadwick 1975: 233) it could not dent the reputation of science for providing "facts" and therefore "truth". Indeed, positivism was able to return in the guise of 'Logical Positivism' which extended the older empiricist hostility to metaphysics, arguing that metaphysical claims were meaningless because they did not admit of verification or falsification by experience. In Britain this movement was particularly associated with A J Ayer's *Language, Truth and Logic* (1936).

Comte also proposed three stages of human thought. First came the *theological* stage when explanation of the natural invoked the supernatural; second the *metaphysical* stage when philosophical but abstract concepts replaced theology and finally the

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<sup>11</sup> The importance of a *contextual cogito* is underlined by the well known quotation from Foucault's **The Order of Things** (1973) where he notes a Chinese classification of animals into the following: (a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) sucking pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camel hair brush, (l) *et cetera*, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies'. (Quoted in both Hatch 1996 and Connor 1997 [1989])

*positivist* stage which was characterized by the ability of science, on the basis of its study of phenomena, to predict. Comte classification of human social processes has been hugely influential and I shall consider one of his successors in Section 2, when discussing the work of James Fowler (2.3). This stream of thought allied to science's predictive power and technology's ability to deliver what was perceived as an improved quality of life has meant that the spirit of positivism and Auguste Comte has remained a powerful force well into the 20th century. Comte's thinking has been very influential in how western European questions have been framed. According to Anthony Giddens (Giddens 1993 [1976]: 138) the idea "that there could be a 'natural science of society' which ... would involve explanatory schemes of the same logical form as those established in the natural sciences" is best expressed in Durkheim's *Rules of Sociological Method* (1938). Furthermore, Bauman also underlines Durkheim's positivist credentials and methodology:

Durkheim took for granted that there was a model of science, shared by all areas of knowledge aspiring to scientific status. That model was characterized first and foremost by its *objectivity*, that is, by its treating the object of study as strictly separate from the studying object, as a thing 'out there', which can be subjected to the gaze of the researcher, observed and described in strictly neutral and detached language. (Bauman 1990: 219)

As we have seen in the work of philosophers such as Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, there has been a long tradition of scepticism regarding the concept of the detached observer. Yet the success of science and its offspring, especially technology, has blunted the impact of much epistemological criticism. In this respect, the process of Positivist sensemaking appears to be principally utilitarian. However, several critiques of neutral beholder have arisen from within the scientific community, which have further challenged the Cartesian cogito at the heart of scientific epistemology, and it is to some of those critiques that I now turn.

### **1.2.5 Critiques of Positivism?**

Positivism has been challenged on a number of fronts during the 20th century, not least by some of the changes amongst scientists and how they see their work. As epistemology in social sciences became more positivist and empirical, thinking within

the world of physics especially became more "uncertain". Just as the settled Augustinian worldview faced a challenge to its way of seeing things, so the mechanistic worldview of Newton, which undergirded positivism would face a similar threat. With the advent of Einstein's thinking and the subsequent "Quantum Revolution" (van den Beukel 1991) Newton's mechanical universe has begun to look much less deterministic. The theories of Godel, Heisenberg and others have moved the scientific community on from the sort of language employed so effectively by people like Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Newton and those who overturned our Aristotelian view of the universe. Behind developments in the methodology of the physical sciences stands a wider epistemological discussion generated by such thinkers as Karl Popper (Popper 1959), Michael Polanyi (Polanyi 1958), Thomas Kuhn (Kuhn 1970 [1962]) and David Bohm (Bohm 1980). In this part I shall look briefly at how some of the ideas of Popper, Polanyi and Kuhn have challenged Positivism.

Karl Popper objected to the uncritical use of terms drawn from the world of physics in sociology and other human disciplines. This is a process of "astonishing crudity" and a "gross misunderstanding" for which Comte cannot evade responsibility. (Popper 1959: 112f). In *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* Popper was critical of the attempt within positivism to reduce meaning to testability. Scientific theories are not, he argues, constructed by inductive procedures from our observations. Rather, they start off as creative intuitions or bold conjectures about the world and, indeed, can arise out of metaphysical speculation. What separates science from metaphysics is empirical testing. However the test he advocates is very different from that of the positivist. Popper contends that: "it must be possible for an empirical scientific system to be refuted by experience" (Popper 1959: 3). In other words falsifiability is more important than verifiability. A theory is only tested when we look for things that count *against* it, since it is all too easy to find things that count *for* it. (Especially if that is what we are looking for!)

Michael Polanyi's *Personal Knowledge* (1958) posed an equally sharp, but very different challenge for an epistemology that makes a clear distinction between the observer and the observed. The challenge to look again at the critical element in the search for knowledge which Popper also drew attention to is put into the context that no knowledge, even of material realities, exists independently of the personal activity

of the knower – i.e. knowledge and sensemaking are *contextual*. Polanyi argued that this personal factor in scientific inquiry needed to be acknowledged and given its proper place in the philosophy of science. While the impersonal and detached approach to science is meant to exclude all subjective bias, according to Polanyi it must be remembered that only a *person* is capable of self-criticism and making a distinction between thought and experience. By pursuing the impersonal science restricts our range of insight and understanding. Science, Polanyi contended, must recover an appreciation of 'personal knowledge' in which the 'subjective' and 'objective' are fused together.

If he is right and the reduction of the epistemic relationship between mind and reality to the impersonal is destructive of scientific method then the non-formal or 'extra-logical' relationship between mind and reality takes on a new and important role. Empirico-theoretical science depends fundamentally on this area of experience and without it would not be able to function. In fact, Polanyi points out, underneath all our scientific activity there is a basic *faith* in the rational constitution of things. There is also a faith in the process of grasping the 'real' world with our concepts and some sort of faith in 'truth' over which we have no control, but by which human rationality stands or falls. Science does not operate from a set of axiomatic, formally defined propositions as the positivists claim; but from ultimate informal assumptions which cannot be proved or refuted and which cannot be completely formalised, yet without implicit reliance upon them there would be no scientific knowledge at all. In Polanyi's scheme of things faith and rationality are intrinsically tied together. This approach links with Mark Johnson's understanding of metaphor as an implicit way of shaping knowledge, language and society discussed earlier and a dialectical understanding of narrative, both of which undergird this study.

Thus, Polanyi argues, unless our minds are informed by prior intuitive contact with reality through our basic beliefs, then they will flounder in pointlessness. It is crucial to the quest for knowledge to bring these beliefs into the open and subject them to the critical processes. One of the methodological aims of this thesis is to engage in such a process. But these beliefs are not merely subjective feelings with no evidence behind them, or ungrounded persuasions in the manner of John Locke. For Polanyi our fundamental beliefs are personal feelings which are related to the most basic interaction between an individual and a reality other than oneself, yet they are also

elemental acts of acknowledgement that arise in response to some intelligibility inherent in the nature of things. In other words, beliefs arise in us because they are forced upon us by the nature of the reality with which we are in experiential contact. But this 'objective' pole must not lose sight of the subjective element where an individual is a rational agent in *believing*, and believing as one is convinced that one *ought* to believe in fidelity to the truth. Such an embodied and dialectical epistemology is central to what follows in the subsequent account.

Finally, in this changing epistemological framework, I shall consider Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1970 [1962]). He argues that, contrary to received wisdom, scientific investigation does not move from careful study and accumulation of data to new discoveries. Instead the results of scientific research are organised around paradigms or models, which themselves have the ability to attract, process and order a vast quantity of data. A paradigm can be regarded as a set of fundamental assumptions within a field of study and this defines the issues considered, the methods used and the answers that are allowed. For much of the post-Enlightenment scientific enterprise the paradigm or root-metaphor has been the machine. Consequently, Kuhn argues, change in understanding happens not so much through mature reflection on quantitative data, but through revolution. The old paradigm is challenged by the new. After its initial articulation it is taken up within the scientific community where it wins some significant support. The new idea is taken by supporters from one paradigm to another and the new theory of knowledge becomes authoritative by overturning the old – in these terms the scientific enterprise can be seen more as a political achievement than an objective positivistic one.

In his original discussion Kuhn draws attention to the significance of communities, both scientific and non-scientific, in the role of paradigm formation. Even greater emphasis is attached to this in the chapter added for the second edition:

If this book were being rewritten, it would therefore open with a discussion of the community structure of science, a topic that has recently become a significant subject of sociological research and that historians of science are also beginning to take seriously. (Kuhn 1970 [1962]: 176)

Since then, historians of science have broadened the social context of science and sought not only to examine the localised effect of scientific communities in the

formation of knowledge, but also place the emergence of paradigms in the much wider environment of society as a whole. So it is possible to write about one of the most successful of the recent scientific paradigms – Darwin's theory of evolution – in terms of science and scientific communities (as Kuhn does) but it is also important to see it in terms of the social conditions of last 19th Century colonial Britain, where the theory was very useful to two key social agendas. The first of these was curtailing the power of the established church and the second was to provide a justification for British imperialism. A vivid example of which is:

F C Selous whose *Sunshine and storm in Rhodesia* (1896) sought to exonerate the British South Africa Company of responsibility for the Ndebele rebellion of 1896. It might seem a cruel and hard fate, Selous observed, that if the black would not conform to the white man's laws, he had to go, or die in resisting them but it was

*a destiny which the broadest philanthropy cannot avert, while the British colonist is but the irresponsible atom employed in carrying out a preordained law — the law which has ruled upon this planet ever since... organic life was first evolved upon the earth — the inexorable law which Darwin has aptly termed the "Survival of the Fittest."* (Brooke 1991: 295)

It is perhaps not surprising to find that both western Christianity and western science have been used to justify British colonial ideology. *The social context of knowledge is fundamental to this study and the way in which I approached this research.* The shortcoming of the so-called neutral, detached observer is neatly observed in the cartoon used by Karl E. Weick (**Figure 1.1**) in his discussion about sensemaking (Weick 1979 [1969]: 28). Probably one of the most trenchant critiques of the positivist paradigm based on a mechanistic root-metaphor is found in the work of Egon G. Guba and Yvonna S. Lincoln (Guba & Lincoln (1981, 1985). They contend that Positivism rests on five assumptions that are increasingly difficult to maintain:

- a) *That reality is unitary, material and "out there", and can be separated out into its constituent parts for study.*
- b) *It is possible to separate the subject from the object and the observed from the observer.*
- c) *An observation that is true at one point will, all things being equal, be true at*



another point.

DON MARTIN DEPT. PART III

# PROFESSOR BLEENT AND THE FLOON BEETLE EXPEDITION



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**Figure 1.1** *The Paradox of the 'Neutral' Observer* from Weick 1979 [1969]: 28

d) Reality is a process of cause and effect

e) This type of inquiry is not influenced by a value system. (Guba & Lincoln 1985)

Or to put it another way: the concepts of a discrete, Cartesian cogito that makes a clear distinction between observer and observed; and a Kantian cogito, which separates the corporeal world from the world of values are increasingly difficult to maintain. Furthermore, one characteristic of Positivism which has been taken as a

strength – its ability to problem-solve – has also been subject to examination. For example, Guy B. Adams and Danny L. Balfour have applied the theological notion of 'evil' to their analysis of public administration with particular reference to the Holocaust. In this context, they believe that the "technical-rational experts and their scientific methodology work to systematically reduce the fundamental contradictions and ambiguities that characterize social life into formulas and programs" (Adams & Balfour 1998: 139). Instead, they argue that contradiction and plurality should be important parts of social policy and that, crucially, a lack of historical perspective within Positivism has been a key factor in events like the Holocaust and the Vietnam War. Affirmation of plurality within a variety of historical frameworks will be key elements in the conversations which follow.

Mark Johnson's critique of what he calls 'objectivism' is based on his contention that this approach does "not give a central place to the operations of nonpropositional and figurative structures of embodied imagination" (Johnson 1987: xxxv). He is referring to things like narrative, poetry, conversation and other non-reductionist elements of sensemaking, which I noted in my Preface. I shall discuss Johnson's ideas on an embodied ontology further below (1.4.1) but again, Adams & Balfour have highlighted the importance of metaphor in social administration:

problem solving is a metaphorical, not a literal, way of thinking about government responses to undesirable social and economic circumstances. More specifically, it is the basis for generating specific metaphors for understanding social problems. (Adams & Balfour 1998: 138)

It is significant that the importance of metaphor in organizational theory has been highlighted by several writers in this field (e.g. Mintzberg 1989; Hampden-Turner 1990; Bate 1994; Grant & Osrick 1996; Hatch 1997; Morgan 1997 [1986]). However the methodological approach of Guba & Lincoln; the social policy dynamics identified by Adams & Balfour; the philosophical analysis of Johnson and the scientific thinking of Polanyi, Kuhn and Bohm are but the tip of the epistemological and methodological iceberg to which the ship of Positivism seems to have been steaming for some time. There are those on watch on the ship's bridge who believe the boat will miss the hazard and that these new developments (which some have labelled 'postmodern') are merely what one would expect of late-modernism (e.g. Giddens 1991, 1993 [1976]; Beck 1992; O'Neill 1995; Eagleton 1996). But there are others

who seem to be already hearing the rending of the hull and the cries of those who are drowning in a sea of postmodernity (e.g. Featherstone 1991; Bauman 1993; Brueggemann 1993; Markham 1994; Connor 1997 [1989]). Postmodernism remains a highly contentious subject. As Mary Hatch has stated from an organizational perspective:

It is impossible to choose a core theory, or typical set of ideas, to exemplify postmodernism – the incredible variety of ideas labelled postmodern defies summarization, and the postmodern value for diversity contradicts the very idea of unifying these different understandings into a single, all-encompassing explanation. (Hatch 1996: 43)<sup>12</sup>

However, the sociologist of religion, James Beckford, has identified four features which he believes are characteristic of postmodernity:

1. A refusal to regard positivistic, rationalistic, instrumental criteria as the sole exclusive standard of worthwhile knowledge.
2. A willingness to combine symbols from disparate codes or frameworks of meaning, even at the cost of disjunctions and eclecticism.
3. A celebration of spontaneity, fragmentation, superficiality, irony and playfulness.
4. A willingness to abandon the search for over-arching or triumphalist myths, narratives or frameworks of knowledge. (Quoted in Heelas 1998: 4)

In some respects this study might be seen as 'postmodern' in that I would endorse the first three of Beckford's points as part of the epistemological framework of my thesis. However, according to these criteria this account is not 'postmodern' in that I have not abandoned the search for an over-arching (but not triumphalist) narrative of my story of lived experience. I shall argue that there is still an important role for metanarratives. Thus, in the debate about the nature of postmodernity, I would identify with the group that are keeping the powder dry on their distress flares as they wait to see whether society has moved from modernity to postmodernity (e.g. Lyon

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<sup>12</sup> Or as Steven Connor has noted, "What is striking is precisely the degree of consensus in postmodernist discourse that there is no longer any possibility of consensus, the authoritative announcements of the disappearance of final authority and the promotion and recirculation of a total and comprehensive narrative of a cultural condition in which totality is no longer thinkable." (Connor 1997 [1989]: 9)

1994; Kumar 1995).<sup>13</sup> In the words of David Lyon:

invites participation in a debate over the nature and direction of present-day societies, in a globalized context, rather than one describing an already existing state of affairs. Quite unprecedented social and cultural shifts are occurring; whether or not 'postmodernity' is the best term to sum them up is a moot point. The important thing is to understand what is happening, not to agree on a concept to capture it with. Postmodernity' will do fine for now. Lyon 1994: 85)

The world of theology is not inured from these developments. There is a lively debate about the existence or nature of postmodern theology (e.g. Berry & Wernick 1992; Reader 1997; Ward 1997a, 1997b; Heelas 1998). Hans Küng has applied Thomas Kuhn's thinking on paradigm shifts to the whole sweep of Christian history. Thus, he argues, Christianity can be divided into the following historical frameworks:

1. *Jewish apocalyptic paradigm of earliest Christianity*
2. *Ecumenical Hellenistic paradigm of Christian antiquity*
3. *Roman Catholic paradigm of the Middle Ages*
4. *Protestant evangelical paradigm of the Reformation*
5. *Paradigm of modernity orientated on reason and progress*
6. *An Ecumenical paradigm of postmodernity?* (Ming 1995)

However, two notes of caution should be sounded at this point. First, behind all six paradigms are a series of complex political, philosophical, historical and organizational issues and I shall be examining some of these in some detail, particularly in respect of paradigm 1 (Section 4) and paradigm 5 (Section 1). Thus, while recognizing with Krishan Kumar "the novelty of our times", I shall leave open whether or not we have moved into an age we can call 'postmodern'. Nevertheless, I would argue that we are moving into a period that we can designate as post-positivist.

The second note of caution is sounded by Grace Davie in her sociological analysis of

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<sup>13</sup> Although, in terms of Ian Markham's definition of postmodernism as "a movement that claims we are on the verge of a new way of looking at the world: one that moves beyond the uniformity of secular modernity to the diversity of a post-modern society" Markham 1994: 189) this is a piece of postmodern research.

religious developments in post war Britain. She warns that it is difficult to be chronologically precise about the genesis of any particular era, let alone a transition that we are potentially immersed in at the moment:

For when precisely does one form of society give way to another and when (if ever) do these shifts have discernible and corresponding effects on particular cultural forms? Or to put the problem more directly, some observers would discover the beginnings of modernity long before others; indeed well before most of Western Europe became an industrial or production-based society. The important point to grasp, however, is the need for a longer-term perspective, particularly in the study of contemporary religion. (Davie 1994: 192-3)

It is axiomatic to this study that, *contra* Beck (Beck 1992) and Giddens (Giddens 1991), in order to understand where we are now we need to understand the past. In the process of exploring the epistemological basis of my thesis, I rejected positivism and a quantitative approach and began examining possible alternatives.

## 1.3 Epistemology and a Phenomenological Framework

### 1.3.1 Introduction

The epistemological framework of this study is more closely related to Phenomenology than it is to Positivism and I shall now sketch out some of the sensemaking network in which this study stands. Phenomenology has its roots in the philosophic programme of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and before that in the thinking of Friedrich Schleiermacher, who I discussed earlier. To speak of a 'programme' in the singular may be misleading because Husserl's thought developed over time (especially after *Logical Investigations* (2 vols 1900, 1901)). His thought has been caricatured as "Cartesianism", "neo-Kantianism", introspection, Platonic essentialism, and indifferent to reality. To some extent Husserl's early thought stands within a positivist tradition, since he believed that philosophy should be put upon a descriptive and scientific basis. This could be done by setting aside our presuppositions about reality and examining the contents of human consciousness in

such a way that it would be possible to uncover the pure structures of that consciousness. Thus Husserl follows Descartes by identifying consciousness as something with its own structures, over against the objects of the world which are subject to scientific investigation. The method Husserl proposed for this exploration is the suspension of our judgements about outer reality. This 'holding back' (*epoche*) or 'bracketing' involves putting in brackets all those elements in experience which do not belong to consciousness itself and this process in turn reveals the timeless essences of the human consciousness to the investigator's *eidetic* vision (from the Greek *eidos* – form). Phenomenological procedures have proved very adaptable and easily exportable to other disciplines (e.g. history, social science, psychiatry, religion) but just as there was no one Husserlian methodology, so the ideas have developed in many different ways in the hands of those who have used them (Farley 1975: 24ff; Giddens 1993 [1976] 30).

Husserl was also influenced in his early thinking by the German philosopher Franz Brentano (1838-1917), especially by his book *Psychology From an Empirical Point of View*, and Brentano also played a significant role in the development of Freud's thought (Scruton 1981: 255ff; Vitz 1988: 50-6). Brentano contended that the fundamental philosophical task was the description of psychological, rather than physical, facts. These facts had an objective reference and that an unconscious mental event was a contradiction. However, Husserl did not accept such a clear distinction between the physical and the psychological. He was also emphatic that phenomenology is not the same as psychology, although both are concerned to describe the experiences of the self. Psychology is, according to Husserl, an empirical science dealing with "realities" whereas phenomenology investigates the basic structures of consciousness and the conditions under which any kind of experience is possible. It is concerned with the description of "pure" phenomena (experiences) regardless of whether these experiences refer to concrete objects, fictions or just to themselves. Consequently, the philosopher makes no statement about the existence of the phenomena under investigation:

From the beginning and during all further steps, phenomenology does not contain in its scientific statements any assertion about real existence.  
(Husserl quoted in Warnock 1970: 28)

One of the criticisms that has been made of Husserl's thought is that it is merely a

reworking of Descartes (Warnock 1970: 34; Macquarrie 1971: 219 though cf Ricoeur 1967: 8211) and certainly Giddens has drawn attention to the absolute difference between an 'ideal universal' and its concrete 'particulars' in Husserl's thought (Giddens 1993 [1976]: 30). However, it has also been argued that in Husserl's later thought the influence of cartesian ideas is diminished and certainly it is at this point that he distinguishes between three levels of consciousness:

1. **The Scientific World:** which systematizes the 'life world' into structures, scientific laws, etc.
2. **The Life-world:** which is an open realm of acts, processes, thought, relations, etc.
3. **Transcendental Consciousness:** including the foundational level of the self-constituting transcendental ego; the transcendental intersubjectivity and the life-world in the *a priori* sense of the universal structures of that which is intuitable in principle.

Following Husserl, phenomenology rejects the Cartesian conundrum of how do we know that the world exists as it does in favour of worlds of lived experience (*Lebenswelt*). Subsequent thinkers in this tradition have tended to reject Husserl's third category of transcendental consciousness and focus much more on the first two. While those who stand in the empiricist tradition have been even more critical. For instance, the thought and, more particularly, the language of the later Husserl has been described as "metaphorical and contorted to the point almost of incomprehensibility" (Scruton 1981: 260) and even some of his followers found its metaphysical style off-putting. Nevertheless, Husserl's thinking and vocabulary has had a profound influence on western thought, not least through people like Heidegger, Sartre, Marcel and Merleau-Ponty. I shall now examine briefly the ideas of three thinkers (Alfred Schutz, Peter Berger and Paul Ricoeur) who were influenced by Husserl's phenomenological approach. Their thinking has shaped the epistemological framework of this thesis in terms of my understanding of the researcher as a contextual cogito and the study being a process of sensemaking reflection upon embodied, lived experience.

### 1.3.2 Phenomenological Frameworks

#### (A) Alfred Schutz (1899-1959)

Although Schutz's thought clearly has strong links with Husserl, Husserl's approach

has also "undergone considerable transformation" in Schutz's reworking of his ideas (Bauman 1978: 174). While Schutz was also concerned to understand the meaning of human activity and the social processes that bring about meaning, he did not put the *Lebenswelt* (the world of lived experience) in brackets like Husserl (Thiselton 1992: 609). Instead this should be the field of investigation or the 'natural habitat' for studying questions of meaning and understanding (Berger & Luckmann 1966: 270). This world of lived experience or life-world, includes the things that are taken for granted and aspects of being human that are not normally reflected upon. Human meaning is constructed in the common-sense, routine activities of everyday life (*Zuhanden*) where things are often taken for granted and unquestioned – hence the importance of conversation and stories for this study. For the Cartesian cogito the world of the routine is not normally an object of active interpretation or re-interpretation. Furthermore, if meaning is to be found in the unreflected acts of everyday life, then question-marks are put against two common ways of developing 'understanding strategies' – those of empathy and discovering what is actually 'happening' in the 'head' of a particular actor. Since, in either case, motives are unlikely to exist as articulated acts of consciousness in the actor's head. People are quite often able to say that they 'know' something that they are unable to give an account of. Consequently knowledge seems to operate at least two levels: at an intuitive level and at an ensuing reflective stage.

Bauman summarises Schutz's approach to meaning in the following way:

Meaning is, therefore, not a hypothetical entity which precedes the experience of an act. Meaning is, instead, constituted in retrospect, in the course of subsequent analysis, when the memories or the image of experience, and not the experience itself, is dissected and re-organised according to some 'reference schema' external to the experience. (Bauman 1978: 180)

Again this understanding of meaning links in with the retrospective nature of sensemaking, noted in my Preface.

There is a parallel here between Schutz's thinking and that of Kant. Kant was concerned with the transcendent principles which precede and structure our experience. In the same way that Kant demonstrated that space, time and causality are



not properties of objects out there but organising principles of knowledge Schutz shows how the structures of everyday life are organizing principles of being-in-the-world or, in my terms, embodiment. One of the vital transcendental conditions is the stock of knowledge. This may include knowledge that is innate and knowledge that is socially derived, but without this pre-understanding action is not possible. A key element in these stocks of knowledge is typology (Giddens 1993 [1976]: 35f, Bauman 1978: 183ff) which has two opposite effects. On the one hand typification allows knowledge to be organised, stored and re-accessed. It also enables comparisons to be made and the stock updated; but it also draws a line around what is *acceptable* within the store, rendering what is outside problematic, posing the question: 'What do we do with knowledge that doesn't fit into the existing stock?'

Ultimately, for Schutz, to understand a cultural object is not to engage in a process of explicating a series of objectified products. By contrast, it is the process of expressing the presuppositions without which the object in question would not appear. This process must take into account the fact that as human beings we experience *multiple* realities (Berger 1979: 37) or, in Schutz's words:

there are several, probably an infinite number of various orders of realities, each with its own special and separate style of existence. (Schutz 1973: 207)

These realities may include dreaming while asleep or day dreaming, but ultimately we return to our wakeful state and 'come back to reality'. It is this state of wakefulness that Schutz calls the paramount reality or paramount state of consciousness. Most of our time reality is experienced in this way, but it can be 'ruptured' relatively easily (e.g. through alcohol, sleep, aesthetic experiences, mood swings). From a new perspective brought about by one or other of the above the 'ordinary' world now takes on a very different perspective and is seen to be much more fragile, and more easily ruptured than it may have been previously. In the sections 2 and 3 I shall be exploring a number of multiple realities in the University of Bath Chaplaincy Centre and at Christ Church, through the narrative of my lived experience.

## **(B) Peter Berger (b 1921)**

Alfred Schutz's approach has had a significant impact on the world of theology and sociology of religion, particularly through the work of Peter Berger. Berger began his

academic career as a sociologist in a theological seminary and in *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (1967) he makes clear his debt to Schutz. Perhaps his most influential work has been *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (1966) which was written with Schutz's pupil and colleague Thomas Luckmann. Berger follows Schutz in arguing that reality *is* a socially constructed phenomenon. We live in an infinitely complex world which we filter and impose meaning upon through the help of symbolic categories. It is by our language and pictures, our mental and cultural images that we give order and meaning to the raw complexity of the world of experience. From this perspective Berger rejects positions that reduce human activity to economic or physiological needs (such as Marxism and Behaviourism). Because the symbolic realm of thought is a priori and indeed constitutive of our experience of 'reality' it is as much a part of that 'reality' as any other symbolically mediated experience.

Another point with which Berger agrees with Schutz is that human construction of reality is not idiosyncratic. By and large we construct a *shared* world with other people, a shared world that we call *everyday reality*. Again sections 2 and 3 of this thesis will explore a number of shared worlds and what happens when attempts are made to change perceptions in these worlds. Within the broader perspective of Western Europe our everyday world tends to lived in the present, and that present is located in a linear and progressive understanding of history. It is also a pragmatic world of work and tasks, as opposed to a fantasy world or one that is lived in our daydreams. This existence is also characterised by a suspension of doubt. There are some ultimate questions that we don't have the certain answers for, but these are pushed from the forefront of our minds so that we can get on with the everyday matters. As a result everyday reality is comprised of surface appearances in contrast to a world of mysterious essences or underlying theological or philosophical principles. And finally, everyday reality is divided into 'spheres of relevance'. Certain aspects of our daily life are perceived as being relevant to a specific assignment or role and we exclude everything that is not relevant to that task. This is another form of compartmentalization.

Although we live our lives in everyday reality, we also recognize its limitations. As human beings we need some method of addressing questions about longer-term values and basic truths, as well as questions about aesthetics and relationships. We

have a need for meaning which pushes us beyond the boundaries of the here-and-now. At the edges of everyday reality is a vast range of experiences that forces us to think about questions of ultimate meaning and there are also experiences of play, beauty or ecstasy that open up vistas of reality that seem to transcend daily life. It is these symbol systems that we construct on the basis of these experiences that Berger calls 'symbolic universes'. Berger argues that humanity produces:

language and, on its foundation and by means of it, a towering edifice of symbols that permeate every aspect of [our] life. (Berger 1967: 6)<sup>14</sup>

In the specific case of religion, Berger argues that it is a type of symbolic universe and that there is a fundamental human need for an overarching symbol system and this may be achieved through a personal philosophy of life, a scientific worldview, a secular ideology (e.g. Marxism), astrology, etc. Religion he defines as:

the establishment, through human activity, of an all-embracing sacred order, that is, of a sacred cosmos that will be capable of maintaining itself in the ever-present face of chaos. Every human society, however legitimated, must maintain its solidarity in the face of chaos. (Berger 1967: 51)

I would argue it is in this process of enabling human sociality that narrative in all its forms (individual, communal, metanarrative and other) maintains a crucial role (MacIntyre 1981, Milbank 1990). It is the continued affirmation of narrative albeit in a critical and reflexive mode which distances my thesis from the sobriquet 'postmodern'. However, in Berger's terms protection from 'chaos' means protection from a reality that seems to make no sense and in that respect he locates sensemaking in our embodied experience. Thus, our everyday life, and those occurrences that fall outside that arena (suffering, death, tragedy, injustice) are given an explanation within an ultimate frame of reference. In this context religious rituals and rites of passage fulfil the function of allowing the non-ordinary to be experienced and the stability of everyday life to be maintained. While religion is constructed through human activity it does not mean that it is either false or a mere fabrication. Certainly, according to

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<sup>14</sup> According to the sociologist of religion Robert Wuthnow, Berger and Luckmann define symbolic universes as: "bodies of theoretical tradition that integrate different provinces of meaning and encompass the institutional order in a symbolic totality" (Wuthnow 1992: 18).

Berger, religion draws on cultural materials, is filtered through the symbolically constructed reality of personal experience and is maintained through the social action of individuals. Nevertheless there are times when Berger appears to argue that the transcendent is able to break through the humanly constructed worlds from outside.

Berger has been criticized for not taking as seriously as he ought the Marxian argument that social context will be the determining factor in an individual's social world (Turner 1991 [1983]; Hamilton 1995) and that it is unclear what role theology would play in his social epistemology (Gill 1977). I too, share that reservation. Nevertheless, Schutz and Berger are important for the epistemological approach of this thesis because they locate sensemaking in the everyday world of lived experience. I shall provide two narratives within a Phenomenological framework of my life-world as an Anglican priest at Bath that phenomenology, so it will be helpful to examine a Phenomenological approach to narrative and I shall do that through the work of Paul Ricoeur.

#### **(C) Paul Ricoeur (b 1913)**

Any attempt to give an overview of Ricoeur's ideas must bear in mind the warning given by Edward Farley:

Paul Ricoeur's thought is so complex and original and ranges over such a massive programmatic that it negates attempts to summarize it. (Farley 1975: 260)

With that proviso in place, I shall begin to explore his thinking, which has its roots in Husserl's phenomenology. Ricoeur's work has been especially significant in the area of hermeneutics, the process of interpretation particularly of texts and this naturally spills over into the more generalised field of interpretations of 'signs' (semiotics). Ricoeur himself was a student of Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973) in the Paris of the 1930s. Marcel's philosophy has been described as being that of a 'Christian Existentialist'. Whether that label is helpful or not, he certainly stressed that interpersonal understanding stands in contrast to the essentially manipulative knowledge of the sciences, and like Buber asserted that persons are not objects but presences who should be addressed as subjects. During 1939-45 Ricoeur was a prisoner of war in Germany and spent the time studying German philosophy (especially Jaspers, Husserl and Heidegger). During this early period of his thought Ricoeur was firmly embedded

in a phenomenological position, although he did not follow Husserl with his ideas of transcendental phenomenology (Bleicher 1980: 219) and this was the case until Ricoeur's work on the symbolism of evil (Ricoeur 1967) challenged his own approach. On the one hand, phenomenology tries to extract from lived experience the essential meanings and structures of purpose. But on the other, to begin a process of examination of the essential meanings of language of sin and guilt (which concerned Ricoeur) requires further fundamental reflection on the nature of symbol, hermeneutics and the philosophy of language.

For Ricoeur symbols are "double meaning expressions" which means they have a spatio-temporal or empirical level of meaning and also a trans-empirical or metaphorical level. According to Ricoeur an examination of these planes of explanation leads us quickly into an exploration of the layers of meaning provided by psychoanalytic theory. Help is provided through psychoanalysis by a combination of causal explanation and deeper self-awareness in understanding. As we have seen, this approach can pose a strong challenge to a religious perspective on events, especially by the way in which psychoanalysis has been developed in an essentially reductionist way by thinkers in the west. As Ricoeur argues:

Freud was only one of the exponents of the reductive hermeneutic ... Marx and Nietzsche, and before them Feuerbach, had to be understood as the fathers of this reductive method. The claim of psychoanalysis to explain symbols and myths as fruits of unconscious representations, as distorted expressions of the relation between libidinal impulses and the repressive structures of the super-ego, compelled me to enlarge my first concept of hermeneutics beyond a mere semantic analysis of double-meaning expressions. (Ricoeur 1978: 318)

A symbol is a double-meaning expression which requires interpretation. Interpretation is a process which involves a recognition that language is essentially plurivocal in nature and has a great deal of overlapping multi-signification, but to interpret double-meanings also requires a double motivation: i.e. a willingness to *suspect* and a willingness to *listen*. Another term for this might be dialogue or conversation. There is a need to strip away disguises and masks, and to engage in iconoclasm, but there is also a requirement to listen to symbols in a search for truth, authenticity and faith. Symbols have an essential duality in that they both hide and reveal, conceal and

disclose, disguise and show and Ricoeur's two-fold approach to interpretation is conceived as a hermeneutic of suspicion and of retrieval. Ricoeur agrees with Freud in separating idols from symbols but argues that we are then left with a Freudian world-view, which in turn will become an idol unless it too is subject to the hermeneutics of suspicion. For some this approach seems to be a positive step forward. For example, one New Testament historian is quite happy to draw on Ricoeur's thinking in asserting:

There is no such thing as the 'neutral' or 'objective' observer; equally, there is no such thing as the *detached* observer. (Wright 1992: 36)

Although some argue that Ricoeur has given over too much ground to the foundationalist suspicion of thinkers like Freud and Marx (Milbank 1990: 268). This thesis will take a dialectical (or conversational) approach to symbols, in particular the symbol of the body, which will involve suspecting and listening. I shall also explore a similar dialectical perspective on narrative and story.

In his later writings (Ricoeur 1978; 1984-88) he explores the creative power of language which is expressed in symbols, metaphor and narrative:

The plunge into the archaic mythologies of the unconscious brings to the surface new signs of the sacred. The eschatology of unconsciousness is always a creative repetition of its own archaeology. (Ricoeur 1974: 334)

Ricoeur contends that metaphors produce new and alternative possibilities of vision and imagination while narratives are able to create new patterns which structure individual and community experience. In this respect Ricoeur's ideas have their roots in Heidegger's thinking about possibility. If it is correct to think of metaphor presenting possibility rather than actuality then it is better suited to opening our minds to new understanding than, say, scientific discourse. However, that is not to say that metaphor does not say anything about reality. For Ricoeur metaphor is not just embellishment and decoration nor is it, more seriously, an invitation to propagate illusions:

Metaphor presents itself as a strategy of discourse that, while preserving and developing the creative power of language, preserves and develops the *heuristic* power wielded by *Fiction*. (Ricoeur 1978a [Ricoeur's italics])

At this point, Ricoeur seems to be drawing less on Heidegger and more on the work

of people like Max Black (Black 1962) and, much further back, Aristotle's *Poetics*. However, he is not particularly extending the boundaries of metaphor and understanding.<sup>15</sup> He is much more original when he explores some of the links between metaphor and narrative and argues that for metaphor:

innovation lies in the producing of a new semantic pertinence by means of an impertinent attribution... With narrative, the semantic innovation lies in the inventing of another work of synthesis – a plot. By means of the plot, goals, causes, and chance are brought together within the temporal unity of a whole and complete account. (Ricoeur 1984-88 vol. 1: ix)

Thus, Ricoeur's thought is to be located within the recognized distinction between plot and story in narrative theory, where plot is a construct of human time and story is a sequence of events in natural time. The telling of the plot is located in human narrative time and many plots can be made from one story as I shall argue particularly in Section 5 when I extend my understanding of the body metaphor. Indeed the different plots or narratives may contribute to a great whole, and the plot itself may well flow and move in the course of emplotment. Against this background Ricoeur rejects a positivist view of history as "unearthing the facts" and argues that it is instead, a process of "imaginative reconstruction". However while history is then seen, from this point of view, as a "literary artefact" and the historian is making the story into a completed whole from his or her individual perspective, Ricoeur does not go as far to say that historical narrative is the same as fiction. On the contrary he argues that: "History is both literary artefact *and a* representation of reality" (Ricoeur 1978b: 191).

The implications of this idea are very significant within Ricoeur's thinking. He argues that fiction has the ability to "re-make" reality because it can order (and re-order) diverse aspects of experience into new shapes and patterns. Fictions, he contends can have the potential power of both transformation and revelation. Historical narrative can also have this transformative power by challenging people's present understanding or current experience, yet it is also a "model" of the past, though it is important not to

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<sup>15</sup> Janet Martin Soskice contends: "The interesting thing about metaphor, or at least some metaphors, is that they are used not to redescribe but to disclose for the first time. The metaphor has to be used because something new is being talked about. This is Aristotle's 'naming that which has no name' and unless we see it, we shall never get away from the comparison theory of metaphor" (Soskice 1985: 89)

lose sight of the fact that there is no original with which to compare the model. Sections 2 and 3 are 'historical fictions' in the Ricoeurian sense, in that they designed to remake the organizational stories of the Chaplaincy Centre and Christ Church. In that respect higher education chaplaincies and other non-parochial churches such as Christ Church are, to use Ricoeur's term for a property of metaphor, 'impertinent attributions' in an organizational sense.

Before I leave this outline of my phenomenological framework for this thesis, it is important to return to my understanding of the researcher as a contextual cogito because Paul Ricoeur's ideas have also helped to shape that aspect of my sensemaking process.

### **1.3.3 Ricoeur & Dialectical Self**

In this respect Ricoeur's work *Oneself as Another* (Ricoeur 1992) has been particularly important. In that book he begins his exposition of self with reference to the Cartesian cogito. He clearly admires the foundational ambition of Descartes' project to ground knowledge in the person who doubts. However, Ricoeur argues that by separating the mind from the body Descartes, in effect, undercuts his own epistemology:

the 'I' who does the doubting and who reflects upon itself in the cogito is just as metaphysical and hyperbolic as is doubt itself with respect to all knowledge. It is, in truth, no one. (Ricoeur 1992: 6)

In the absence of a location for the 'I' or the 'self' within the Cartesian will to doubt, Ricoeur searches for another location in the "shattered cogito" of Nietzsche, whom he sees as the "privileged adversary of Descartes" (Ricoeur 1992: 11). According to Ricoeur it was in his lecture course on rhetoric, taught in Basel during the winter term 1872-73 that Nietzsche first proposed his revolutionary idea that tropes are inherent to all linguistic functions and that language is essentially figurative. On this basis, Nietzsche argued that there are no facts only interpretations. Thus his anticogito (or hyperbolic doubt of the subject) destroys the epistemological question that the cogito was held to answer. The locus of Ricoeur's understanding of self is in a reflexive cogito that is inspired not by a will to power but by a will to discover, which involves a three-fold dialectic of reflection and analysis; selfhood and sameness; self and other. This hermeneutic of self is a narrative that is aware of its own vulnerability through a



lack of foundation and a key element in such an understanding is trust:

attestation is fundamentally attestation *of self*. This trust will, in turn, be a trust in the power to say, in the power to do, in the power to recognize oneself as a character in a narrative, in the power, finally, to respond to accusation in the form of the accusative: "It's me here" (*me void!*) (Ricoeur 1992: 22)<sup>16</sup>

I shall consider the issue of "attestation of self" and *me voici!* Further below in my discussion about the location of the narrator in this story (1.5.2).

Alongside this triple dialectic there are other elements which are fundamental to Ricoeur's understanding of self and personal identity. One of these is *narrative*. He contends, in a striking use of positivist metaphor, that narrative is "the first laboratory of moral judgement" (Ricoeur 1992: 140) and that the configuration of narrative events (emplotment) – coming after the events themselves – is an essential part of the will to discover. In his discussion of the broken cogito (Ricoeur 1992: 318) Ricoeur returns to the importance of one's own body in the narrative of self. It is:

necessary to tie the corporeal and mental criteria of identity – continuity of development, permanence of character, habitus, roles, and identifications – to the constancy of a self that finds its anchor in its own body. (Ricoeur 1992: 319)

For Ricoeur our bodies fulfil two crucial roles in his hermeneutic of self. First they are emblematic "of a vast inquiry ... beyond the simple mineness of one's own body" (p 320) and secondly they are also mediators between "the intimacy of self and the externality of the world" (p 322). It is through our bodies that we are able to experience "otherness" and it is only through the experience of otherness that we experience "self".<sup>17</sup> Or as the theologian Alistair McFadyen has put it:

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<sup>16</sup> Cf Blau's paradox of social exchange discussed in Mangham 1986: 69-70 and Kelly's work on bipolarity in Bannister & Fransella 1986 [1971]: 12-16.

<sup>17</sup> George Herbert Mead and Erving Goffman have also argued that the genesis of self-understanding lies in the way in which we define ourselves in terms of 'other'. For example Mead states that the most primitive response to self-consciousness "finds its expression in taking the role of the other, playing at the expression of their gods and their heroes, going through certain rites which are the representation of what these individuals are supposed to be doing." (Mead 1962 [1934]: 153) While Goffman suggests

The body is not, then, a closed boundary between exclusively private and public life, but a field of communication, a point of punctuation, or an organised space in which personal existence of an individual is rooted. It is therefore a boundary, but it is a semi-permeable one, which demarcates physical space as having a particular ethical significance as the peculiar space of a particular life. (McFadyen 1990: 89)

An embodied 'self' exists in a field of communication and in a dialectical relationship with that field. The contextual cogito cannot exist without being open to that 'other'.

I shall argue that this understanding of the hermeneutics of 'self' has implications for the organizational hermeneutics of the Church. It too, can only understand its pluriform 'self' in relation to a pluriform 'other' and I shall explore that process throughout my thesis. However there are other characteristics of embodiment which I have not yet touched on and it is important to consider the other characteristics of the body metaphor before embarking upon the narratives of my lived, or embodied, experience an Anglican priest in Bath.

## 1.4 Towards the Church as an Embodied Gestalt

In this part I shall consider some of the work that has helped to shape my understanding of embodiment (1.4.1) and then outline my notion of the Church as an embodied gestalt (1.4.2). I shall then return to these ideas in Section 5 when I reflect on the embodied nature of the University of Bath Chaplaincy Centre (5.3.2) and Christ Church (5.3.3) as organizational anomalies.

### 1.4.1 Embodied Frameworks

There is a wide range of theoretical and practical literature which discusses the body as a metaphor for human social activity (e.g. Douglas 1973 [1970]; O'Neill 1985, 1989; Lakoff 1987; Johnson 1987; Featherstone 1991; Turner 1996 [1984]; Falk 1997 [1994]; Mellor & Shilling 1997). In the process of this study I have particularly

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that "When we allow that the individual projects a definition of the situation when he appears before others, we must also see that the others, however passive their role may seem to be, will themselves effectively project a definition of the situation by virtue of their response to the individual" (Goffman 1959: 20).

examined four contrasting approaches to embodiment — those of Bryan S. Turner (1991 [1983], 1996 [1984], 1997); John O'Neill (O'Neill 1985, 1989); Philip A. Mellor & Chris Shilling (Mellor & Shilling 1997) and Mark Johnson (Lakoff & Johnson 1980, Johnson 1987). All of these people have explored a plurality of bodily concepts and some of the dialectical terrain in which they occur.

#### **(A) Bryan S. Turner**

In his influential work on the body, Turner has argued that western traditions of embodiment have been shaped by "Hellenized Christianity". He, too, sees embodiment in dialectical terms and consequently argues for a fundamental, internal opposition between spirit and flesh within the Christian faith:

The flesh was a symbol of moral corruption which threatened the order of the world; the flesh had to be subdued by disciplines, especially by the regimen of diet and abstinence. The body in Greek thought had been the focus of the struggle between form and desire (between Apollo and Dionysus). Christianity inherited this viewpoint, but darkened it by seeing the flesh as the symbol of fallen man and irrational denial of God. (Turner 1996 [1984]: 64)

The best that can be said of Turner's reading of early Christianity (Turner 1996 [1984]: 132-34) is that it is contentious. Certainly, the tenuous parallel he draws between the ascetic practices of the Qumran sect and Jesus' own approach to purity will not be borne out by this study. In Section 4 I shall argue that Jesus' 'cavalier' approach to Jewish purity laws would have set him at odds with the writers of the Dead Sea scrolls (see **4.2.2**). Furthermore, Turner's understanding of the place of women within Paul's writing is equally selective. While he is correct to note those points at which Paul accedes to the social conventions of the time, he fails to acknowledge the enormous challenge that Paul's social egalitarianism makes to established urban culture (Theissen 1982; Meeks 1993; Fiorenza 1994 [1983]; Schottroff 1995). Again, I shall address these questions in more detail in Section 4 (**4.3.2**). Nevertheless, it is worth noting at this juncture that while Turner makes the claim that capitalism undermines patriarchy whereas Christianity has supported it (Turner 1996 [1984]: 143), but he fails to comment on some of the feminist readings of Paul's use of the body metaphor which have understood Paul's

usage as a fundamental critique of male domination (Schottroff 1995: 33).

Turner is quite clear in his assertion that "the body is the most potent metaphor of society" (Turner 1996 [1984]: 125) and that Western thinking in this area "has been profoundly shaped by a series of primary dichotomies" (Turner 1996 [1984]: 20), including body/soul, nature/culture, individual/society and Apollo/Dionysus.<sup>18</sup> Like many others he is also sharply critical of the impact of Cartesian dualism (mind/body) on our thinking about the body. In this respect he believes that:

Postmodernism has critically challenged the foundation of Cartesian ideology by its emphasis on the narrative quality of human knowledge and by its approach to the idea of social constructionism as a challenge to empiricist notions of reality. (Turner 1996 [1984]: 17)<sup>19</sup>

Turner places great stress on Feuerbach's critique of Descartes' separation of mind and body and Christianity's perceived negation of human sensuality.<sup>20</sup> However, it is axiomatic to this study that to see Christianity as a *single* ideological body of thought is no longer tenable. Like Judaism it has always been a diverse body of opinion (Dunn

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<sup>18</sup> Pasi Falk has noted a similar dynamic in his work on what he terms "eating communities": The human body occupies an ambiguous, even paradoxical role in cultural categorization – from the cosmologies of the archaic societies to the discursive and non-discursive practices of modern Western civilization ... The ambiguous nature of the body may be formulated by means of a number of binary oppositions which all posit the body in a double role. The body is both the Same and the Other; a subject and an object, of practices and knowledge; it is both a tool and raw material to be worked upon. (Falk 1997 [1994]: 1)

<sup>19</sup> Commenting on Cartesian thought from a postmodern perspective Carl Raschke argues: "The concept of 'body' in the postmodern context, of course refers to something more than physical agent. 'Body' itself becomes a 'metaphor' for the metaphoric postmodern; it connotes both the region of alterity, of the 'outlandish' and the *outré*, with respect to the Cartesian metaphysical subject; it becomes the pre-discursive horizon for all possible significations that transcend the logic of linguistic acts and their applications ... Body becomes a metaphor for the dance of signification." (Raschke 1992: 103 see also Tilby 1985 on dance as a metaphor for faith and the Church.)

<sup>20</sup> "The Christian sets aside his sensuous nature; he wants to hear nothing of the common, 'bestial' urge to eat and drink, the common, 'bestial' instincts of sexuality and love of young; he regards the body as a congenital taint on his nobility, a blemish on his pride, a temporarily necessary degradation and denial of his true essence, a soiled travelling garment, a vulgar incognito concealing his heavenly status." (Quoted in Van A Harvey 1995: 226) The reference to the "urge to eat and drink" is particularly ironic given Jesus' habits regarding table-fellowship – see 4.2.2.

1977; Dudley & Hilgert 1987) and if postmodernism has challenged the way in which we perceive the Enlightenment it must also challenge some of the great creations of that period, such as hegemonic Christianity. While I wish to affirm the call from Feuerbach and Turner for an embodied approach to social existence, I shall argue that there is a *embodied dialectic* at the heart of Christianity, as a faith, and the Church, *as an organization*. This thesis will follow a similar path to Paul Ricoeur, Janet Martin Soskice and Mark Johnson in understanding metaphor as essential unity but a dialectical unity in which one thing is spoken of in terms of another – metaphor and not-metaphor (m/~m). In similar fashion I shall follow Ricoeur in seeing self-identity as being defined at least in part by other, or the not-self (s/~s) and extend that argument so that an important part of an organization's self-identity is also derived through other, or the not-organization (o/~o).

## **(B) John O'Neill**

John O'Neill's anthropological study of the body as a social metaphor begins by positing two notions of body — the physical and the communicative. The physical body is an 'object like other objects that stand around us' and, as such 'can be bumped into, knocked over, crushed and destroyed' (O'Neill 1985: 16). By contrast, he argues that the communicative body, following Merleau-Ponty, 'is the general medium of our world, of its history, culture, and political economy' (O'Neill 1985: 17). O'Neill stresses that these two 'bodies' cannot be separated from each other. They interact so that social institutions rethink the body and we rethink institutions with our bodies. Indeed our embodied experiences form the foundation of our social lives:

What we see, hear, and feel of other persons is the first basis of our interaction with them. This is the carnal ground of our social knowledge. Because *society is never a disembodied spectacle*, we engage in social interaction from the very start on the basis of our sensory and aesthetic impressions. (O'Neill 1985: 22 — author's italics)<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> For O'Neill there is an 'incarnate bond between self and society' (1985: 23) and it is in this context that primitive classifications of gender, kinship and replication are of enormous significance in understanding the social and historical matrix of humanity. Consequently for O'Neill: 'The myths of the first people are not the poor science of modern men: nor are they mere allegories or poetic

O'Neill outlines five ways that society is incarnated through embodied experience:

1. ***The World's Body*** — In different cultures and religions parts of the body have been symbolic sources in the search of microcosms for the universe.
2. ***Social Bodies*** — O'Neill draws extensively on Mary Douglas's ideas in discussing the kinship of the human body with social bodies. He notes the importance of food rituals for the establishment of social boundaries which, in turn, are linked to ideas of purity and I shall argue in Section 4 that this was characteristic of Jesus' understanding of the body.
3. ***The Body Politic*** – The body as a metaphor for the body politic has its roots in ancient civilisations, specifically in the works of Aristotle, Seneca and Cicero. O'Neill traces its development through Christian usage (the doctrine of the Incarnation and the theology of St Paul), together with the 'legal fiction' of the monarch's two bodies and the role of the Eucharist within the Church.
4. ***Consumer Bodies*** – O'Neill identifies the automobile as *the* symbolic good for the consumer body. It is the 'vehicle not only of bodies but of bodies who value the ideas of privacy and freedom' (O'Neill 1985: 97). It expresses key, western cultural goals and desires (e.g. technology, private property, individual mobility, sexual rivalry, social competition) and is consumed as a part of the 'tio-body' (a bodily need), the 'productive' body (part of the economic process) and the 'libidinal' body (self-identity and happiness).
5. ***Medical Bodies*** – O'Neill's picture of the management of modern medicine resembles an Orwellian nightmare. He describes it as "supremely technocratic and bureaucratic". Moreover, it is clean and "As such it is the envy of all other forms of managerial power in the modern state' (O'Neill 1995: 119).

Within O'Neill's analysis there is in society a plurality of 'bodies' and the human body functions across a diverse field. However, it is important to point out that prior to his discussion of these five bodies O'Neill noted a primary dialectic between the 'physical' and 'communicative' bodies. Both O'Neill's pluralist understanding of the body metaphor and its dialectical or conversational relationship as an embodied

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embellishments of truths otherwise achieved by science. They are indispensable origins of human order and commonwealth apart from which the later achievements of humanisation and scientism are impossible conceits.' (O'Neill 1985: 28-29)

dialectic of self (s) and non-self (~s) (together with its organizational counterpart (o/~o)), will form an important part of the framework for this sensemaking narrative.

**(C) Philip A. Mellor & Chris Shilling**

Philip A. Mellor and Chris Shilling define embodiment as 'the stubborn enfleshment of humans' (Mellor and Shilling 1997: 4) arguing that such an understanding cannot be dissolved into thought, nor can it be reduced to a Foucauldian notion of discourse. Mellor & Shilling make use of a concept of 'habitus' which they trace through Aristotle and Aquinas to Bourdieu and Mauss. In their words, habitus refers to those:

pre-cognitive, embodied dispositions which promote particular forms of human orientation to the world, organise each generation's senses and sensualities into particular hierarchies, and predispose people towards specific ways of knowing and acting. The term implies that human bodies are permeated by, and contain within them, their own historical experience of social relations. (Mellor & Shilling 1997: 20)

Thus, a narrative understanding of historical experience or social biography is a key component of an embodied sensemaking process. To illustrate this, they outline a three-stage history of embodiment in recent western culture: (i) Medieval, (ii) Protestant, and (iii) Baroque.

*(i) The Medieval Body* — emerged out a pre-occupation with the body in Christianity at this time. However, although this religiosity made much of the sinfulness of the body the result was not a distancing from the body but an intense "flight into physicality" (Mellor & Shilling 1997: 37). Remedial action for physical sin could include excessive physical subjugation (e.g. flagellation) yet this was responsible, in part, for the inherent stability of medieval concepts of the body.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Carnival was another example of this paradox, which: 'usually occurred in the build-up to Shrove Tuesday of *mardi gras*, and was intended to represent and reveal the workings of sin in order that it might be got rid of before Lent. It included massive displays of consumption (in Nantes, Shrove Tuesday was dedicated to Saint Degobillard – Saint Vomit) and sexuality (prostitutes were essential, as were symbols of lechery). Also central to these occasions were the symbolic overturning of hierarchies, collective expressions of envy and jealousy, and a carnival figure who dominated the feast and was tried and condemned at the end of it.' (Mellor & Shilling 1997: 41)

(ii) ***The Protestant Modern Body*** — is linked with the evolution of the 'individual' which began before *the* Reformation but, according to Mellor and Shilling was accelerated by the Protestant *re-formation* of the body. They identify three characteristics of the Protestant modern body: (i) *The autonomisation of language*; (ii) *Cognitive narratives of the self*, (iii) *Grotesque passions*. Mellor and Shilling note that: "This focus on reflexive thought and the text characteristic of Protestantism has much in common with the 'disengaged reason' of the Enlightenment" such that modernity can be seen as "a secular form of Protestantism" (Mellor & Shilling 1997: 46-7). However, the sensuality which it sought to subjugate returned in a subsequent re-formation.

(iii) ***The Baroque Modern Body*** – this term embraces the priority of the cognitive with a recovery of the sensuous in a contemporary understanding of the body as an internally differentiated arena of conflict. This understanding is characterised by: (i) *Cognitively oriented bodies*; (ii) *Cognitive body options*; (iii) *Sensuously oriented bodies*; (iv) *Dangerous crossings* (*i.e.* the full development of the baroque modern body remains a future possibility with society still in a state of transition).<sup>23</sup>

Mellor and Shilling argue that all three forms of embodiment remain extant in contemporary society. Furthermore, "the reappearance of sacred forms of sociality in certain areas of social life *and* the increasing elimination of the sacred" (Mellor & Shilling 1997: 162) have helped to produce two distinct forms of social organizational. These are: (a) *Banal associations* – productive forms of sociality involving the creation of goods, services and relationships in advanced capitalist societies which are structured by rationality and have become separated from the symbolism of the sacred. (b) *Sensual solidarities* – consumption-oriented forms of sociality, based on feelings and emotions. Sensual solidarities are derived from being with other human beings and exhibit tribe-like characteristics (Mellor & Shilling 1997: 174).

While these forms of relationality may appear to be opposites, Mellor and Shilling see them as contrasting or dialectical ways of managing the cognitive and corporeal flux

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<sup>23</sup> Beckwith, drawing on Douglas 1973 [1970], also refers more generally to three bodies: individual, social and the body politic (Beckwith 1993).



of modern life. There is a strong similarity between Mellor & Shilling's *banal* and *sensuous* groups and the categories I shall explore in Section (2.3) that are employed in Carl S. Dudley's *directional* and *relational* churches (Dudley 1982) and Nils Brunsson's *action* and *political* organizations (Brunsson 1989). These dialectical approaches to organizations – particularly those outlined by Brunsson and Dudley – have shaped my own dialectical attitude to sensemaking at the Chaplaincy Centre (V. S. Roberts 1997b) and are discussed further in the next section (2.3). In the meantime, it is important to note that the attributes of dialectic, biography and relationality are fundamental to my understanding of organizational embodiment. These are characteristics that are explored further in the work of Mark Johnson to which I now turn.

#### **(D) Mark Johnson**

Mark Johnson's early ideas on the body are set out in conjunction with George Lakoff in their book *Metaphors We Live By*. Following a critique of Positivism they argue that the dialectical myths of objectivism and subjectivism reflect genuine aspects of the human need to understand our external and internal worlds but they should be integrated into an experientialist myth, which affirms the embodied and contextual nature of human knowledge. Thus:

the nature of our bodies and our physical and cultural environments imposes structure on our experience, in terms of natural dimensions. Such gestalts define coherence in our experience. We understand our experience directly when we see it being structured coherently in terms of gestalts that have emerged directly from interaction with and in our environment. (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 230)

Mark Johnson has developed some of these ideas with respect to the body, in subsequent work, by arguing that the embodied nature of human being provides many of the imaginative structures of human understanding in what could be called an embodied reflexivity. He begins by making what he calls "three controversial claims": "Without imagination, nothing in the world could be meaningful. Without imagination, we could never make sense of our experience. Without imagination, we could never reason toward knowledge of reality." (Johnson 1987: ix) According to Johnson, the reason for the marginalisation of imagination is the triumph of an

Objectivist philosophy. However on the basis of a critique of foundationalist views of knowledge, which draws on the work of Hilary Putnam, he argues that "any adequate account of meaning and rationality must give a central place to embodied and imaginative structures of understanding by which we grasp our world." (Johnson 1987: xiii) The particular focus of our imaginative structuring of understanding is human bodily experience.

He believes that "human bodily movement, manipulation of objects, and perceptual interactions involve recurring patterns without which our experience would be chaotic and incomprehensible." (Johnson 1987: xix) These patterns Johnson calls "image schemata" and they are "gestalt structures since the forms they make are unified wholes. An important part in the development of these image schemata is played by metaphor, which Johnson does not see as "merely a figure of speech" but as "a pervasive, indispensable structure of human understanding by means of which we figuratively comprehend our world." (Johnson 1987: xx) His ideas are also set out in response to the dominant place that Cartesian and Kantian thinking hold in western philosophy, especially in respect of the dichotomy between mind and body. Johnson seeks to re-integrate the two by "putting the mind back into the body" (Johnson 1987: xxxvi) so stressing the "nonpropositional, experiential, and figurative dimensions of meaning and rationality." (Johnson 1987: xxxvii)

For Johnson, bodily experience *precedes* propositional understanding. A vital component in this move towards sensemaking is the process of reasoning through metaphors and other figurative structures. Such structures are not a matter of individual choice and application but are part of a public and shared preconceptual dimension of meaning. In this experiential context he defines metaphor as "a process by which we understand and structure one domain of experience in terms of another domain *of a different kind*." (Johnson 1987: 15 – author's italics) Following on from this his understanding of schema is based on Kant's notion of schemata as nonpropositional structures of imagination. These "have a reality as structures or patterns of mental representations" (Johnson 1987: 24) which raise them above the specificity of particular rich images. An example of how this works is provided by Johnson's discussion of containment schemata. He begins by stating that when we reason, we perceive ourselves as starting at a point (e.g. a proposition) from which we proceed in a series of steps to a conclusion. Metaphorically the process of

reasoning is seen as a path and this is reflected in our language (e.g. let us *start out from* the proposition that Hamlet feared his father; you can't *move to* that conclusion from *where* you are now; he's *lost the track* of the argument) but to have a starting point and a path also means that we are located in that space defined by the proposition. Equally, to hold to the contrary proposition means being located outside that bounded space and the 'container' schema itself becomes part of the sensemaking process. Johnson argues if we understand categories metaphorically as containers (where everything falls within the container or it does not) then it has a three-fold effect on the shape of our knowing: (i) The law of the excluded middle' where everything is either P or not-P; (ii) 'Transitivity of set membership' where sets are understood as containers for their members and subsets; (iii) 'Negation' where a denial of some type of experience is understood as characterising what is outside the category. Essentially, he believes "such inferential patterns arise from our bodily experience of containment." (Johnson 1987: 40)

A further constraint on meaning arises from the internal structure of image schemata, which Johnson calls their gestalt structure, that is "their nature as coherent, meaningful, unified wholes within our experience and cognition" (Johnson 1987: 41). In contrast to the image schemata for *containment*, he examines the gestalt structure of *force* and its impact on human understanding by outlining six aspects which play a part in our sense of force: (i) it is experienced through interaction; (ii) it usually involves the movement of an object through space in a certain direction; (iii) there is typically a single path of motion; (iv) forces have origins or sources and agents directing them towards targets; (v) they have degrees of power or intensity; (vi) a sequence of causality is involved. In addition there many common "force structures" which operate in our experience, e.g. compulsion, blockage, counterforce, diversion, removal of restraint, enablement, attraction, impact. Johnson analyses modal verbs such as can, may, must, could and might in terms of this force gestalt and concludes that even in the comparatively minimal gestalt such as a compulsion schema there is significant structure: "The actual force moves in some direction. If it interacts with some object, then it causes that object to move in the same direction. The relevant vector traces out a path of motion. Thus, the moved object can be located at a given time relative to its progress along that project path. And, in some cases, there is a goal towards which the force or forced object moves and in relation to which the object

can be located." (Johnson 1987: 62) This structure can be seen even in a simple statement such as: you *must* move your foot, or the car will crush it.

It would be a mistake to see Johnson's notions of gestalt structure or image schemata and their embodied basis as somehow merely an analysis of the *surface* of meaning. He extends his understanding of metaphor through schemata such as balance, paths, links, cycles, scales and human bodies: "The fact of our physical embodiment gives a very definite character to our perceptual experience. Our world radiates out from our bodies as perceptual centres from which we see, hear, touch, taste, and smell our world" (Johnson 1987: 124). He goes on to underline this approach by arguing that: "our understanding is our bodily, cultural, linguistic, historical situatedness in, and toward, our world. And ... image schemata, their abstract extensions, and their metaphorical elaborations constitute a great part of the constraining structure of this understanding" (Johnson 1987: 138). At this point Johnson returns to imagination and its role within understanding, particularly its place within the thinking of Kant. He admits that Kant's treatment of this subject is complex and full of technical jargon but he *précise*s Kant's position as follows: "Imagination generates much of the connecting structure by which we have coherent, significant experience, cognition, and language" (Johnson 1987: 165).

For Johnson himself, imagination exercises productive, reproductive, schematising and creative functions while its components include categorization, schemata, metaphorical projections, metonymy and narrative structure. This latter element highlights the fact that structures of rationality are shared by communities and "Not only are we born into complex communal narratives, we also experience, understand, and order our lives as stories that we are living out. Whatever human rationality consists of, it certainly ties up with narrative structure and the quest for narrative unity" (Johnson 1987: 171-72). In the closing chapters of the book Johnson sets out his reasons for rejecting objectivism while retaining realism. His realist perspective is based on the fact that "image schemata can have a public, objective character (in a suitably defined sense of 'objective'), *because they are recurring structures of embodied human understanding*. They are part of the structure of our network of inter-related meanings, and they give rise to inferential structures in abstract reasoning. They are thus quite public and communicable in the required sense – they play an indispensable role in our sharing of a common world that we can have

knowledge of." (Johnson 1987: 196) In other words, objectivity is a publicly shared understanding grounded in an "embodied" or "experiential" realism.

Johnson's *social* construct of "publicly shared understanding" overlaps with the Gadamerian notion of "full rapport" or "shared understanding" outlined in Thiselton's hermeneutics of *self* (1.1) which has been used to frame this section. Turner, O'Neill, Mellor & Shilling have all developed different forms of dialectical embodiment in relation to Christianity but they have not attempted to examine how their understanding of the body metaphor might *shape* organizational perceptions of the Church. One writer who has explored some of the implications of the Church as an embodied gestalt is the theologian Peter C. Hodgson and it is to his ideas that I now turn.

### **1.4.2 An Embodied Gestalt**

A number of writers have discussed the body as a metaphor for God's relationship to creation (e.g. Jantzen 1984; McFague 1993) but Peter C. Hodgson, in particular, has used it to shape his understanding of the Church (Hodgson 1989, 1994). He develops the body metaphor in terms of ecclesial organization in dialogue with Georg Hegel's and Ernst Troeltsch's discussion of 'gestalt' (shape) and Hayden White's analysis of tropes. He argues that Hegel's alternative to Cartesian dualism is based on a distinction-in-unity of body and spirit where it is impossible to have *geist* without *gestalt* (Hodgson 1989: 83). This is in contrast to Troeltsch for whom any new cultural synthesis is generated from two sources (ethical ideals and historical exigencies) and these contingent syntheses dam and shape (*gestaltung*) the historical stream of life (Hodgson 1989: 138-39). Hodgson identifies a similar generative function within White's description of tropes as "generative figures of speech or thought by their variation from what is 'normally' expected, and by the associations they establish between concepts normally felt not to be related" (White quoted in Hodgson 1989: 85). From these insights, Hodgson defines metaphor in terms of a dialectic of 'self' and 'other':

the most basic form of endless interplay of identity and difference that lies at the heart of human experience; as such it is the foundation of poetry and logic, of narrative discourse (whether fictional or historical), of religious and ethical use of language, and to some degree of scientific and technical

usages as well. (Hodgson 1989: 85-86)

Hodgson then develops the metaphor of 'shape' or 'gestalt' as a description of divine action:

God is present in specific shapes or patterns of praxis that have a configuring, transformative power within the historical process, moving the process in a determinate direction, that of creative unification of multiplicities of elements into new wholes, into creative syntheses that build human solidarity, enhance freedom, break systematic oppression, heal the injured and broken, and care for the natural. (Hodgson 1989: 205)

I would argue that my sensemaking research is a narrative attempt at a "creative unification of multiplicities into new wholes" but I would take issue with Hodgson's use of very similar language when he is writing about the doctrine of the Incarnation as the gestalt of ecclesial being or the Church.<sup>24</sup> Significantly, in view of the ongoing discussion about the dialectical self (self/not self) and the dialectical Church (holy/not holy), Hodgson casts his understanding of incarnation, particularly Jesus' death, in a similar way. It is particularly significant that the death of Jesus involves an action upon his *body* because it is through the very act of crucifixion that human negation, suffering and death are taken into divine being. Thus, for Hodgson, the bodily significance of Jesus lies in "his not-Godness, his naturalness, his suffering and death, his contingency and limitation" (Hodgson 1994: 252). In other words, God is definitively present in the world not in some perfect human form such as Greek statue but in Jesus' finitude, mortality, susceptibility to suffering, sexual and ethnic specificity. Furthermore, Jesus' body and person play a decisive role in mediating the shape of God in history (i.e. the "shape of love in freedom") but, since this is a communal rather than an individual gestalt, Jesus' personal identity does not exhaust or provide a closed definition of divine and human being. Yet, having underscored this communal aspect of incarnation, it is important for Hodgson that the gestalt

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<sup>24</sup> Hodgson expounds the Incarnation in terms of an embodied notion of en-fleshment. By which he means: "specific shapes or patterns of praxis that have a configuring, or transformative power with historical process, moving the process specifically in the direction of the creative unification of multiplicities of acts into new wholes that build human solidarity, enhance freedom, break down systematic oppression, heal the injured and broken, and care for the natural world." (Hodgson 1994: 250-51)

becomes "incarnate in a concrete historical figure" because of "the centrality of personal embodiment in human experience" (Hodgson 1994: 254). This appears to be the fulcrum of Hodgson's incarnational dialectic as he attempts to hold together concepts of human and divine, individual and communal, specific and universal within his ontology. Crucially for this study, his notion of personal embodiment or incarnation is also the basis of his understanding of the Church:

The ecclesial community is the "body" of Christ – the gestalt by which the love-in-freedom proclaimed and enacted by Jesus becomes intersubjectively efficacious in the ongoing history of the Christian faith. The ecclesial gestalt is never adequately embodied in an empirical church or Christian group; it is rather a critical, productive paradigm of praxis by which the empirical churches are continually judged and transformed. (Hodgson 1994: 255)

It is my contention, however, that in this description Hodgson has not followed the pattern of his own gestalt. Although he speaks of God being present in the world not as some Greek statue but in Jesus' *inconvenient specificity*, his image of the Church gestalt is of a perfection which seems more akin to the Greek statue he rejects. Hodgson's embodied gestalt of the Church becomes a disembodied ideal. It is a "productive paradigm of praxis" which is never "adequately embodied in an empirical church". A number of thinkers have noted that Christianity begins with the loss of a body (Georg Hegel; Michel de Certeau; Graham Ward). It is my contention that in its search for an embodied gestalt, the Church must embody the same inconvenient specificity, which Hodgson identified in the person of Jesus. This means a *hermeneutic of organization* must reflect upon the awkward rough edges, the collective conflicts and contradictions and the inconvenient specificity which being the Church must *of necessity* involve. I shall conclude this consideration of the epistemological basis of my thesis by outlining my understanding of an embodied gestalt for the Church.

## 1.5 An Embodied Church

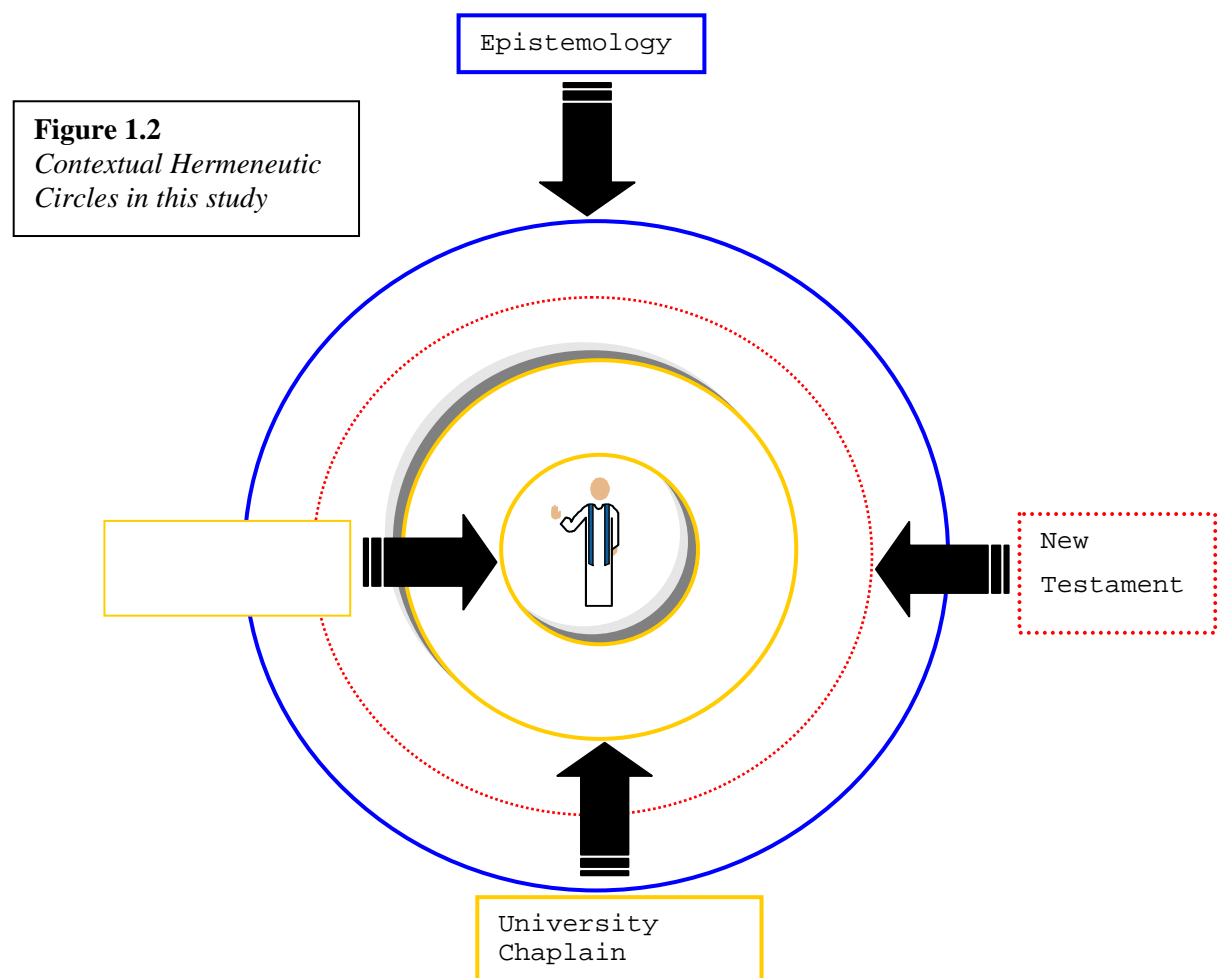
### 1.5.1 Summary

This section has traced a pathway from the foundation of modernity in the ideas of

Descartes and Kant (1.2.1), through some of the theistic (1.2.2) and atheistic (1.2.3) responses to their thinking, to the emergence (1.2.4) and gradual senility (1.2.5) of positivism as an epistemological framework. I have set out basis of a phenomenological approach to my epistemology, including Schutz and Berger's ideas on lived experience (1.3.1), and underlined the importance of Paul Ricoeur's ideas on narrative and metaphor to my research (1.3.2 and 1.3.3). A great deal has been written about the body during the time that I have been engaged in writing my thesis (1.4.1) and this has enabled me to reflect in detail on the nature of the body as an social metaphor, including the work of Peter Hodgson and his understanding of the Church as an embodied gestalt (1.4.2). I shall set out my conclusions on what it means for the Church to be an embodied organization. It is important to note that this was (and is) part of an ongoing process of reflection which has been running before, throughout and after the events which follow in sections 2 and 3; but it is placed here to provide an epistemological framework for understanding the organizational hermeneutic which underlies the rest of my thesis.

## 1.5.2 Conclusion: An Embodied Hermeneutic

At this point it may be helpful to return to my diagram of the contextual hermeneutic circle within which I shall be working (Figure 1.2).





This section has set out my epistemological framework of a contextual cogito or, to put it another way, an embodied researcher reflecting on his life experience. In the sections which follow I shall be giving a reflexive account of my experience as an Anglican priest working within two organizational anomalies, i.e. as University Chaplain at the University of Bath (Section 2) and Officiating Minister at Christ Church, Bath (Section 3). In the course of the narratives and conversations which have informed my sensemaking, the metaphor of the body has played a fundamental role in shaping my understanding of these events. To begin with the metaphor was unacknowledged or, at least employed in an unreflexive way as a straightforward metaphor for organizational diversity. Part of the reason for this was that the research focus originally centred on Christ Church. It was only as I broadened out my thesis to look at the wider context of my research, including myself and my role as University Chaplain, that I began to explore in greater detail the importance of the body metaphor for my own organizational sensemaking. In the process of this development I have identified five elements which I believe are central to my embodied understanding of the Church as an organization. The Church must be: (i) Biographic; (ii) Relational; (iii) Reflexive; (iv) Dialectical; (v) Contingent. I shall conclude this section on by exploring my concepts of an embodied organizational ontology in more detail. In terms of Thiselton's analogy of the GP's consulting room outlined in my Preface, what follows at this stage is the equivalent of a review of the medical literature. Sections 2 and 3 describe the patient's experience or interpretative glosses, while Section 5 will attempt to bring the two together in a 'shared understanding'.

### **(i) Biographic**

The Church as an organization, has a complicated anatomy of individual and communal stories, and there is an increasing number of biographic or narrative approaches for examining complicated or even contradictory organizational tales (e.g. Bate 1994; Roe 1994; Boyce 1995; Boje, Gephart & Thatchenkery 1996; Grant, Keenoy & Oswick 1998). The role of the narrator is particularly important and two 'storied' methods that explore the role of the author or researcher are provided by Iain L. Mangham and Mary Hatch:

- a) Mangham has used a dramaturgical analogy for social and organizational behaviour, which elaborates a storied approach to organizations based on a metaphor of the theatre (Mangham 1978, 1986). Following thinkers like Schutz,

Burke and Goffinan, Mangham argues that each individual can be seen as a social actor who improvises a "performance" within the often very broad limits set by the scripts which society "makes available" (Mangham 1978: 25). One of the key assumptions here is that "society can only be realized, that microscopic and episodic action can only occur, and that individual purposes can only be achieved through the sharing of meaning about particular events, situations and relationships and that such sharing is realized symbolically, rhetorically, and dramatically." (Mangham 1978: 26) The role of the organizational researcher or "dramaturg" in this analogy is to analyse the situational script<sup>25</sup> and assist actors "in rewriting their scripts and performing new or revised parts" (Mangham 1978: 107). Thus, for an actor within a particular situational script the broad dimensions of performance "are outlined by custom and practice" (Mangham 1978: 130). Within this framework my research into the Chaplaincy at the University of Bath and Christ Church, Julian Road can be seen as both an individual and collective search for situational scripts. Because of the unusual place that a non-parochial University Chaplain and a non-parochial church have within the Church of England, custom and practice have been of very limited use in defining our scripts. In these circumstances, my role as researcher in this narrative has not just been that of a dramaturg suggesting a limited rewriting of the script, but was also that of an actor in the play. In this analogy I have been seeking new cognitive and behavioural scripts for the cast of which I was, at the same time, a member.

- b) Another narrative approach is that of Mary Hatch (Hatch 1996) which places great importance on the role of reflexivity in the process of organizational storytelling. Having established a reflexive basis for "narratology" in Giddens (1991) and Beck (1992) she develops some ideas of literary critic Gerard Genette in terms of a research methodology for organizational study. Genette sets out four narrative positions for story and storyteller: (i) narrator tells story as objective observer; (ii) narrator is minor character in story; (iii) main character tells the story; (iv) narrator is omniscient, moving between all viewpoints at will. The outcome is a dialectical form of research where "the construction of the narrator

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<sup>25</sup> More recently Mangham has distinguished between two types of script: "Scripts held in the memory may be called cognitive scripts, those that are enacted may be term behavioural scripts." (Mangham 1995b: 502)

in the narrative act mediates the relationship between seeing and saying and in this way the researcher and the scientific work is constructed from the positions of both seeing and saying" (Hatch 1996: 20). In the terms of Hatch's analysis I would describe my role as: narrator who tells his story as subjective or reflexive observer.<sup>26</sup>

An embodied understanding of the Church will be concerned with nurturing and encouraging such narrative processes. The most complex and hard-edged organizational questions arise, when different narrators are telling different stories. I shall also be following Emery Roe's organizational dialectic of story/counter story leading to metanarrative. It is my contention that the hard edges should not be silenced by silencing one or other story but by searching the narrative landscape for further stories which will encourage the first steps of mutual understanding.

## **(ii) Relational**

The second characteristic follows on from the first. An embodied Church must be relational and, in being so, it must seek to value its *identity*, its *difference* but (crucially) the *differences of others* in its pluralist context. I have argued throughout this section that my hermeneutic of 'self' is dependent on an 'other', and my organizational hermeneutic is shaped by the hermeneutic of self. The same is true at the equally foundational level of human language as Charles Taylor has argued:

A language only exists and is maintained within a language community. And this indicates another crucial feature of a self. One is a self only among other selves. A self can never be described without reference to those who surround it. (Taylor 1989: 35)

This means affirming inter-faith differences as well as intra-faith diversity. For an organization such as the Church, this should involve a greater appreciation of its Jewish roots, areas of common ground with Islam, a shared understanding of incarnational ideas with the Hindu faith or the role that inculturation plays in both Christianity and Buddhism. Nevertheless although there are undoubtedly shared

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<sup>26</sup> Hatch believes that greater use of reflexive narratives "could help organizations' transitions from the authoritarian relationships typical of hierarchical structures, to the influence based, largely egalitarian relationships touted by those who advocate flatter structures such as are found in project teams, networks, strategic alliances and joint ventures." (Hatch 1996: 31)

characteristics between such 'bodies', there are also important areas of ideological and organizational difference which are impossible to ignore. Terry Eagleton points out that many theories regard ideology *as a* screen, which intervenes between us and the real world: "If only we could nip around this screen, we would see reality aright. But there is, of course, no way of viewing reality except from a particular perspective" (Eagleton 1994: 11).<sup>27</sup> For Eagleton one of the components which makes ideology a fascinating and useful concept is that of power and any relational discourse must address this aspect. The contested issues of power and authority will be recurring themes in my narrative, especially as the body metaphor has been a longstanding arena of conflict in the Church (Beckwith 1993). It is important to note that an embodied understanding of the Church which takes the body as an image for its diversity and relationality, should not be a strategy to dissemble open debate, discussion and difference. Christianity should embody a healthy respect for difference, which allows questions of power to be faced up to and openly engaged with.

### **(iii) Reflexive**

Part of that process of engagement with 'another' must be a reflexive understanding of oneself. If human beings and their social constructions are perceived *as* temporal narratives then a degree of critical understanding is required about how we bring ourselves and our communities into being. I am referring to what Kieran Flanagan has called, in an organizational context, a "sociological judgement" (Flanagan 1996: 30) or what Ricoeur designates as a "hermeneutic of suspicion". Significantly Giddens links reflexivity with issues of power – notably "empowerment" (Giddens 1991: 137-43) and "surveillance" (Giddens 1991: 149-51). He believes that one of the defining

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<sup>27</sup> As David J. A. Clines has frankly stated: "I do not assume, for example, that ideologies are false, partly because I too have ideology and hold to my ideology with conviction, thinking it 'true'. I don't believe that ideologies are private affairs, however, and I accept that most of 'my' ideology is inherited or acquired from others (from some group or other), that my ideology serves my own interests and the interests of my group or groups, that I tend to think of my ideology as natural and obvious, and that I am not always fully aware of how much I am taking for granted. So while I am not ashamed of having an ideology, I am abashed at taking so much at second-hand, so much for granted. Nor am I unhappy that other people have ideologies of their own, but only that they also too often think that their ideologies are obviously right and (especially) that they try to tell me that I should be adopting their ideologies." (Clines 1995: 11-12)

characteristics of the contemporary world is the emergence of internally referential systems of knowledge and power (Giddens 1991: 140) which are oriented "primarily towards control" (Giddens 1991: 180). In his discussion of reflexivity in institutions he argues that:

Surveillance plus reflexivity means a 'smoothing of the rough edges' such that behaviour which is not integrated into a system – that is, not knowledgeably built into the mechanisms of system reproduction – becomes alien and discrete. To the degree to which such externalities become reduced to point zero, the system becomes wholly an internally referential one. (Giddens 1991: 150)

This thesis as a retrospective, organizational narrative will portray Christianity as a series of rough edges in various manifestations – its first century origins, eighteenth century Bath and twentieth century English higher education. An embodied reflexivity must be able to reflect critically on these sharp edges, the proximate issues of power and the human tendency to blunt the cutting edge of social and institutional change. One of the key reasons for an embodied dialectic in the Church which can embrace groups like higher education chaplaincies or churches like Christ Church (or, in Giddens' terminology, patterns of behaviour which are not integrated into the system) is that they provide a necessary corrective to such systems of control. Their contribution is not only essential within the dialectic of consensus and change, unity and diversity – it is inescapable.

#### **(iv) Dialectical**

One of the main problems to emerge from Cartesian ontology is the disembodiment of reason, where rationality merely makes use of the senses rather than being an attribute of bodily existence. This study will seek to affirm the distinctive contribution of dialectic and to embody numerous "binary opposites" or "polarities". That means a refusal to privilege mind over body; or nihilism over meaning; or consensus over conflict. A similar disengagement can be detected in western society between bodily existence and moral theory (Guba & Lincoln 1985; Turner 1996 [1984]; Mellor & Shilling 1997). An important example of dialectic within this study will be that of 'self' and 'other' as elaborated by Paul Ricoeur (1.3.3) and Mark Johnson (1.4.1). I shall pursue the idea that a hermeneutic of 'self' based on a dialectical relationship

with 'other' provides the basis for an organizational hermeneutic based on a similar pattern for the Chaplaincy Centre, Christ Church and for the Church as a whole. In this respect, Emery Roe's application of literary theory to policy analysis will be of great significance to my account. His dialectical approach of 'story' and 'counterstory' will play an important part in framing my understanding of the following organizational narratives (5.2). Against this background, it is interesting to note an embodied tendency in some of Alasdair MacIntyre's recent work. His account of recent developments in moral enquiry can be cast in terms of Roe's narrative analysis – i.e. as an encyclopaedic story and a genealogical counter story that leads to a (small-m) metanarrative of philosophy as a "craft" (MacIntyre 1990) –in which it appears that for MacIntyre participation in a craft is part of temporal, storied existence<sup>28</sup> which has both physical and moral implications. Thus, the aim of productive crafts:

is never *only* to catch fish, or to produce beef or milk, or to build houses. It is to do so in a manner consonant with the excellences of the craft, so that not only is there a good product, but the craftsman is perfected through and in her or his activity. This is what apprentices in a craft have to learn. It is from this that a sense of the craft's dignity derives. (MacIntyre 1994: 284 – my italics)

A cautionary note should be entered here. One person who has written about the dialectical nature of organizations and given some form of embodied shape is Charles Hampden-Turner (Hampden-Turner 1990: 121) who has given a similar organizational 'dialectic' two embodied forms as two cartoons – the *dilemma* and the *impasse* (**Figure 1.3**). He has adapted some images from *A Political Bestiary* by Eugene N. McCarthy and James K. Kilpatrick (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978) for organizational purposes. He argues that if a dilemma, with its squinting eyes focussed on its horns is not, "reconciled in its early stages may become an *Impasse*, a much more formidable beast." (Hampden-Turner 1990: 120) However, I will argue in

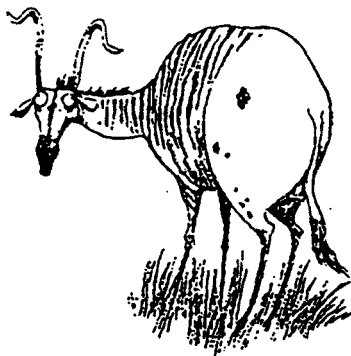
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<sup>28</sup> "To share in the rationality of a craft requires sharing in the contingencies of its history, understanding its story as one's own, and finding a place for oneself in the enacted dramatic narrative which is the story so far ... the rationality in which he or she thus shares is always, therefore, unlike the rationality of the encyclopaedic mode, understood as a historically situated rationality, even if one aims at a timeless formation of its own standards which would be their final and perfected form through a series of successive reformulations, past and yet to come." (MacIntyre 1990: 65)

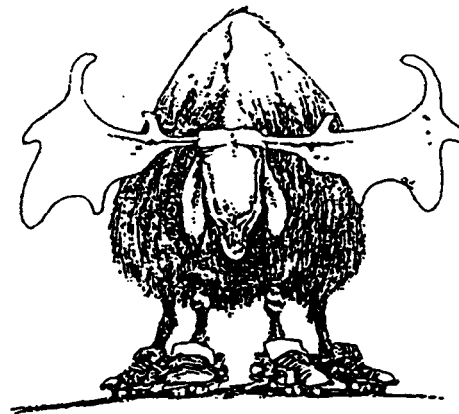
Section 5 that our participation in such 'crafted' narratives as those envisaged by MacIntyre, is in terms of a "story so far ...". Therefore to see the Church as an embodied organization must also mean that it is a contingent organization, which is liable to "successive reformulations" not a "reconciled" organization where activity and change have ceased.

**Figure 1.3**

*Examples of Hampden-Turner's Embodied Organizational Problems*



**1 The Dilemma.** A mottled quadruped with a pronounced squint, one eye being focused upon each of its two horns. Contrary to popular superstition, the Dilemma is not usually dangerous and can easily be domesticated.



**2 The Impasse.** A much more formidable beast than its cousin, The Dilemma. Those unwilling or to unable domesticate Dilemmas may have no choice but to confront the Impasse.

### (v) Contingent

The moral future described by MacIntyre, which is found in belonging to a craft, learning its narrative traditions and refining its stories, appears at first sight to be very different to the notion of risk society envisaged by Ulrich Beck in which the past plays a negligible role and everything is determined by the future.<sup>29</sup> The older feudal and industrial patterning of society is being dissolved by a social transformation, which Beck likens to the Reformation. Curiously, for someone who dismisses history,

<sup>29</sup> "The center of risk consciousness lies not in the present, but *in the future*. In the risk society, the past loses the power to determine the present. Its place is taken by the future, thus, something non-existent, invented, fictive as the 'cause' of current experience and action." (Beck 1992: 34). A similar charge of refusing to acknowledge the significance of the past has also recently been made against the work of Anthony Giddens by Stjepan Meštrović (Meštrović 1998).

he finds another parallel between the religious world views of the past and contemporary society. He contends that the anthropomorphic understanding of the spirit world in the Middle Ages has been replaced by a contemporary shadow world in nature: "Everywhere, pollutants and toxins laugh and play their tricks like devils in the Middle Ages." (Beck 1992: 73) According to Beck the characteristics of this new reformation are: (i) the dissolution of traditional western industrial society and welfare states through the growing importance of the individual and his or her reflexive biography; (ii) this process of individualization has meant a loosening of class ties and that it is increasingly a matter of choice as to which subculture one belongs; (iii) however social inequality remains but tends to be transformed into personal failure not a failure of the political system; (iv) there has also been a corresponding 'freeing' relative to gender status which Beck believes has brought into being a "negotiated family" of "regulated exchange of social comfort, which is always cancellable" (Beck 1992: 89); (v) 'industrial' society never *was* industrial society but was always half feudal society because the individual freedom on which it was based was only granted to one gender – its "triumph" also leads to its "dissolution"; (vi) the individual rather than the family becomes the reproduction unit of society which is dependent on market-mediated subsistence; (vii) new social movements come into being as a response to increasing risk consciousness and risk conflicts, and as protests against administrative and industrial interference in private, personal life.<sup>30</sup>

I would take issue, however, with Beck's statement that in contemporary, western (risk) society the past has no influence. This is not borne out by his own use of patterns from European social and religious history to describe the present. An embodied or gestalt understanding of organization and society would seem to make more sense of the recurring social phenomenon, which he has identified. For example, in discussing the political implications of the economic changes brought about by the risk society Beck states with a great metaphorical flourish: "one might say that the devil of the economy must sprinkle himself with the holy water of public morality and put on the halo of concern for society and nature" (Beck 1992: 186). Thus, while both he and MacIntyre give a heightened importance to the role of small groups with a

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<sup>30</sup> "on the one hand the new social movements (ecology, peace, feminism) are expressions of the new risk situations in the risk society. On the other, they result from the search for social and personal identities and commitments in detraditionalized culture." (Beck 1992: 90).



strong self-identity within society, it is MacIntyre who better understands the continuing importance of established narrative patterns in successive reformulations of the social landscape. It is this dialectic of social being – between the established and the contingent, the given and the changing – which MacKinnon and others have recognised within the metaphor of the body of Christ (4.4.2 (B)) and which seems to be equally present in both MacIntyre and Beck. In that respect, both MacIntyre's 'crafts' and Beck's 'new social movements' are a contemporary response to the contingency of the social body in the context of the lived experience of humanity.

I began this epistemological exploration with Matthew Arnold's poetic vision of human sensemaking:

*Before man parted for this earthly strand,  
while yet upon the verge of heaven he stood,  
God put a heap of letters in his hand,  
and bade him make with them what word he could ...*

from "Revolutions" by Matthew Arnold

In the next two sections I shall attempt to take the heap of events from my embodied experiences and make of them what sensemaking narrative I can, beginning with my initial period as University Chaplain at the University of Bath.



## Section 2:

### ‘No Handles? No Doors?’ Conversations about the Chaplaincy

*What does it mean?*

*Suddenly, effortlessly to touch the core.*

*Mostly in glow of friends*

*but today just strolling the length of the city street.*

*Carnival moments.*

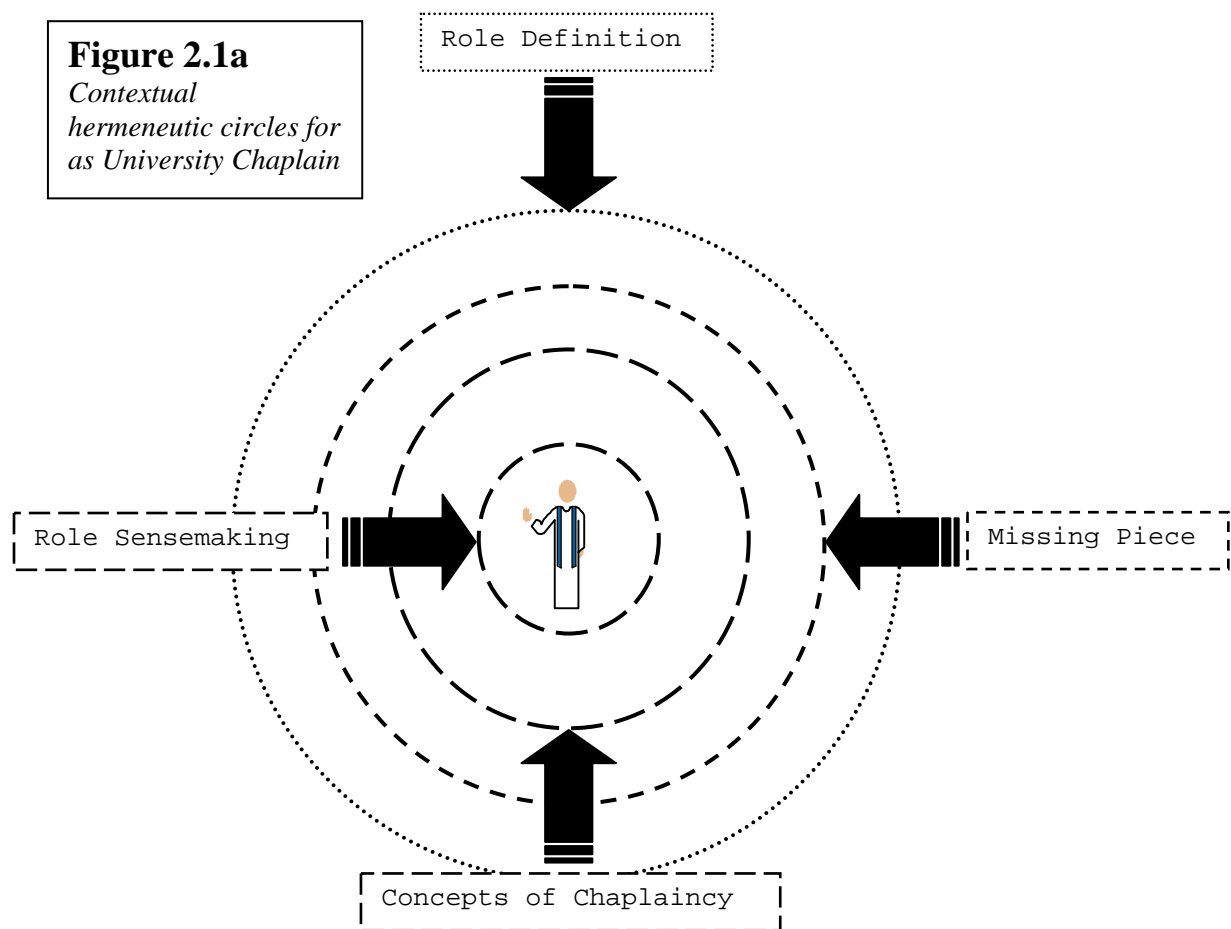
*The apple back on its tree*

*in a garden lost, a garden longed for.*

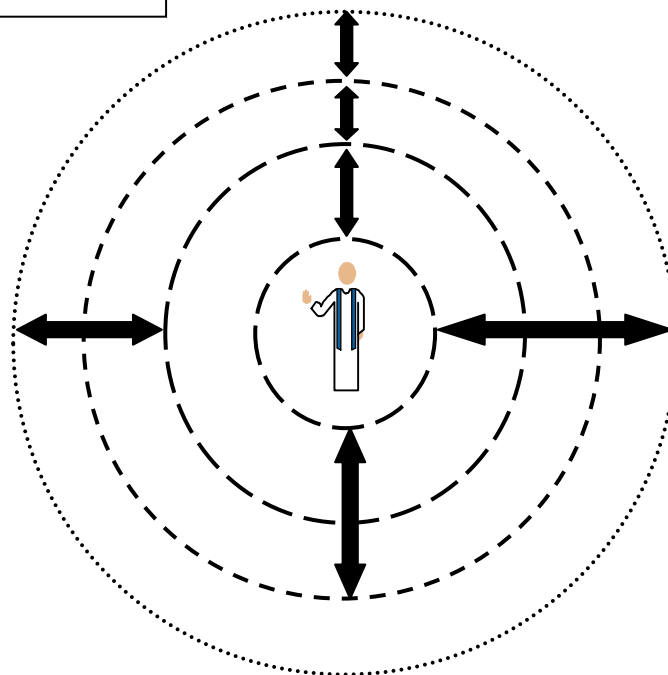
From “Leisure” by Michael O’Siadhail (O’Siadhail 1995)

## 2.1 Introduction

I have chosen to head this section with Micheal O'Siadhail's poem *Leisure* for two reasons. First, he describes certain of embodied encounters between friends and strangers as "carnival moments". This section is an account of such carnival moments between the various strands of Christianity which existed within the University of Bath during my time as University Chaplain. As I shall record, there were times when these strands seemed like friends and other times when they appeared to be strangers. Second, another key element of O'Siadhail's carnival is its diversity. As I have already observed, plurality is characteristic of the higher education environment which forms the context for the 'lived experience' of my study. This section is an account of some of the sensemaking conversations I had, and the sensemaking narratives that I constructed, in the *initial* stages of my time as University Chaplain at the University of Bath. I shall use a similar format of mapping out contextual hermeneutic circles of 'self-in-role' for this section to that used in the Preface (**Figures 2.1a** and **2.1b**). I shall begin with a description of some of the approaches to role definition which I adopted as a curate – my first post as an Anglican priest in the parish of St Thomas-on-the Bourne, Farnham (**2.2**). This early form of sensemaking is important because in many ways that framed my original responses to my early encounters at Bath. In particular, this experience at Farnham relates to my conversation with John Burgess, the Archdeacon of Bath, described in the Preface and used to frame this section of my thesis. From then I shall describe some of the formative factors in my initial period as University Chaplain. Again I shall frame this in terms of Thiselton's analogy of the GP's consulting room, where theoretical texts interact with embodied experience. In **2.3** I shall discuss two of the written contexts for my role as University Chaplain — the details of the job which were produced for applicants and the research by Barry C. Morgan into the nature of Anglican higher education ministry. Then in **2.4** I will give an experiential account of the mission (called *Missing Piece*) that the Chaplaincy organised with all the Christian student societies during my second term as Chaplain. Finally in this section I shall outline how the Chaplaincy's Anglican link with Christ Church fitting in to this theoretical and experiential context (**2.5**).



**Figure 2.1b**  
*Hermeneutic Interaction*



It is important to note **Figure 2.1b** because once more it will be difficult to keep these narratives chronologically discrete. For example, the textual narrative in **2.3** starts prior to the events related in **2.4** but concludes with a paper that I produced for the Chaplaincy Management Committee sometime after *Missing Piece* had finished. However much it may be desirable to separate out these accounts, the contextual hermeneutic circles will inevitably inter-relate.

Of course, it would be possible to give a quite different account of my becoming a priest in the Church of England and Chaplain at the University of Bath, which relies totally on theological discourse. A good example of this is the current vogue for framing all ecclesial thinking exclusively within a Trinitarian framework (e.g. Zizioulas 1985; Greenwood 1994; Volf 1998). However, I have chosen not to do that. The reason for such a choice is not that I believe theology to be irrelevant – far from it. In many respects this thesis has a theological starting point. That is, in the Christian tradition, the story of God's embodied encounter with the world – the Incarnation of Christ. I would argue that this narrative is affirming of creation as a whole, including humanity's lived and embodied experiences. On that basis it is incumbent upon theology to engage with other forms of discourse, including theories about the nature and dynamics of human organization. Thus, from a theological perspective, I would argue that in my role as an Anglican priest personal and organizational sensemaking are incarnational imperatives. It is to that process of role definition and sensemaking that I now turn.

## 2.2 Anglican Curate to University Chaplain

My first post after ordination was that of 'curate' in the Parish of St Thomas-on-the-Bourne, Farnham. In terms of role definition one of the striking similarities between my posts at Farnham and Bath was the ambiguity of the two job titles. In certain parish contexts I would be called "the curate" but, technically, both the terminology and the definite article were incorrect. As there were two "curates" I was not *the* curate but, since my colleague Adrian had already served one curacy, he was the "senior curate" and I was the "junior curate". Yet while these are still common designations, in strict Church of England terms, it is the Vicar who holds the "cure of

souls" for a parish and is actually *the* curate. To be precise, we were the Vicar's assistant curates. However, the title "Junior Assistant Curate" bore little relation to the responsibility I was encouraged to take on, particularly in respect of Brambleton Hall which was a church plant on a council estate where I was encouraged to be, in effect, the 'priest-in-charge'. Thinking back, I feel that adapting to this loose-fit of job titles and expectations was enormously helpful. I have a strong memory of arriving in Farnham to be Assistant Curate of St Thomas-on-the Bourne and finding that Brambleton Hall had clear expectations that I would be 'their' minister. Very early on in the process I asked my vicar about this, in an effort to clarify matters. His response was non-directive. He acknowledged that the expectation was there but left any decision about how I should respond to my discretion. I found this surprising and initially frustrating but in the four years at Farnham I was given great freedom to develop my own role (including other areas such as youth clubs, work in schools and hospice chaplaincy) under cover of this highly ambiguous title of Junior Assistant Curate. This is particularly significant in terms of my conversation with John Burgess, the Archdeacon of Bath, about the role of University Chaplain, which I described in my Preface. When I received no clear direction from the Archdeacon, I set out to do what I had done before and develop my role as I saw fit: This involved the development of an Anglican link with Christ Church and it was only subsequently that John Burgess made it clear that this was not what he had anticipated. He had merely expected me to continue the established pattern of chaplaincy work until my contract finished.

In that last paragraph I am struck by my use of the metaphor: "under cover of ...". I think this was an important image for me then. It appeared in the article which I wrote out of my experience at that time *Umberto Eco and the 'Habit' of Holy Communion* (Roberts 1989) where I used the image of an all-encompassing monk's habit to explore liturgical diversity contained within the Church of England. There is at least a superficial parallel between the many roles covered by one job title and the many different activities included in the one heading of 'worship'. This curious ambiguity of title and wide diversity of role was to be repeated in a different way when I moved to Bath. Furthermore, this article was significant in that it was an attempt to think through some of the implications of using the body as an organizational metaphor for the Church. Umberto Eco (Eco 1986) argued that an

individual's interior life is affected by exterior clothing and discussed some of the paradoxes of monastic attire and I extended his metaphor into an organizational simile for the Church, arguing that the Church as 'a body' needed to wear matching loose-fitting clothes, especially in terms of worship. I concluded at the time that one of the great strengths of the body metaphor was that it could be an image for both *unity* and *diversity* within the Church. When I moved on to become a chaplain at the University of Bath I took with me this rough organizational sketch of the Church as 'a body' and set about seeing how it would shape my understanding of the new role. The process of sensemaking as University Chaplain involved a carnivalesque reflection upon a variety of documents, conversations and oral traditions. The slightly disjointed nature of this part of my narrative will give the reader a flavour of the carnival feeling that accompanied this stage of my sensemaking journey and the sense of disorientation that I initially felt in this new role. That lack of alignment with existing bearings was itself a significant factor in my sensemaking process.

The job I applied for at the University of Bath was called "The University Chaplain". When the details of the job came through (see below **2.3**), they also included the designation "Full-time Chaplain" and when those short-listed arrived for interview we discovered a third description – "Residential Chaplain". How can one job have so many different titles? On reflection it seems to me to be the same phenomenon that I experienced in Farnham but in reverse. The variety of names reflects the search for an overarching label, which could embrace a number of roles. There are a number of chaplains to the University of Bath and the pattern that was established at the time was that any faith group could appoint a "chaplain" to the University but they should be willing to work in conjunction with the University Chaplain. This post is specifically paid for by the Church of England but the University has a substantial input into the process whereby the post-holder is chosen and this state of affairs seems to have its roots in the Church of England as the established church. However, there are numerous problems with this. The first is that the established nature of the Church of England *can* (though not of *necessity*) be a problem when trying to work ecumenically with other Christian denominations and when trying to co-operate with other faiths. The fact that the University Chaplain always has to be an Anglican appears to be an issue every time a new appointment is made (see point 1 the letter of my immediate predecessor in Appendix 3 written as background to my appointment

in 1989). That has certainly been the case as the team of chaplains has prepared for making a new appointment in 1996, as it was on the previous occasion in 1989. This state of affairs has deep historical roots in the emergence of voluntarism within British society and religion (see Sections 1 and 2) and this historical perspective is a factor in the question of whether the *University* Chaplain is, or should try to be, the **Anglican** Chaplain at the same time. Is it desirable to combine the two roles? My personal feeling *is* that it is possible to take on both roles as long as the chaplain is aware of what she or he is doing in those circumstances. This issue also underlies the link between the Chaplaincy and Christ Church. *In the former I attempted to fulfil my role as University Chaplain and in the latter I aimed to fulfil my own expectations as an Anglican Chaplain.*

The Chaplaincy Centre has a brief to be a place "open to people all faiths and of none" and the University Chaplain is expected to be a facilitator for the ecumenical team. I have been happy to accommodate those roles alongside my tasks as an Anglican priest and see them *as a* natural extension of my understanding of the establishment of the Church of England. Thus, my personal view is that 'establishment' has little to do with the place of bishops in the House of Lords and much more to do with a Church that is open and accessible not just to its members but all sections of society. The difficulty is that feelings can run very high on this issue. For example, in my first year as University Chaplain I was asked to speak at the Catholic Chaplaincy on my vision for the Chaplaincy as a whole. It did not enter my head that the establishment of the Church of England would be an issue and I did not mention it. In an effort to stir up interest my talk was entitled "Why I am not ecumenical" and outlined a view of ecumenicity which affirmed the different traditions in the Chaplaincy as a strength rather than an obstacle. Yet, despite what I thought was a provocative title, the response was just a few half-hearted questions until one student asked whether or not I thought establishment unfair. From that moment, the discussion took off. Establishment can be a major point of friction between denominations and yet, like the question of intercommunion, it is not going to be solved at a local level so perhaps it would be better to abandon a title of University Chaplain, with its establishment overtones and find one that is less contentious?

From the person specification that the applicants received it appeared that the



favoured alternative to 'University Chaplain' was 'Full-time Chaplain'. However, my subsequent experience has been that while this title moves problems regarding establishment into the background, it then brings forward other tensions – particularly between *part-time* and *full-time* chaplaincy commitments. These might appear easier to handle and less dependent on the resolution of larger institutional questions, and that is true up to a point. However, the Chaplaincy team is still subject to decisions by the Catholic Diocese of Clifton, the Methodist Conference and other denominational factors to move people on or alter the perimeters of the part-time chaplain's job description at will. The existence of part-time chaplains has tended to raise the additional matter of who or what is a chaplain? The Church of England has tended to define a "chaplain" in terms of an ordained man or woman, while other denominations have used the designation much more widely to include lay people. For the Chaplaincy at Bath, in my early years, this developed into a regular discussion at chaplains' meetings about the Society of Friends (the Quakers) who appointed a team of *four* people to be *the* Quaker 'chaplain' – a matter further complicated by the fact that they do not have ordained ministers or priests.

Since the designations 'full-time' and 'part-time' chaplain raise another set of difficulties, what about other options? The term Residential Chaplain has not been used during my time at Bath. My feeling was that it did not bring anything helpful to the issue of presence and non-presence at the University raised by the full-time/part-time designation and, also like that alternative, it would lose the overt connection with the organization itself. I shall discuss Barry Morgan's research into the changing concepts of Anglican higher education chaplaincy further in 2.3 (B. Morgan 1986). He has shown, however, that chaplains consistently perceive themselves to be on the fringes of their universities and I would argue that the title University Chaplain provides at least one person (and *as a result* the whole team) with a secure place in the university community. Another possible name for my new role would simply be to have been to call my post the "Anglican Chaplain". While this might help with easing ecumenical tensions, it would again lose the important foothold that being overtly linked with the university gives. Significantly, this may be an issue, which each succeeding chaplain will have to grapple with since my successor in the post is now known as "University Chaplain and Ecumenical Team Leader".

Thus having experienced one job in a parish where the title was ambiguous and gave few clues to the task, I moved to the University of Bath in 1989 where the same was true. In this sensemaking context the communal nature of the role of Anglican priest is very important. Although the job title and role were ambiguous at Farnham, there was a community with which to explore the *role* (Brambleton Hall and the wider parish of St Thomas) and there was also a clear geographic limit to the job provided by the parish boundaries. Therefore I could, for example, see the task of being a governor at Pilgrim's Way (the local first school near to Brambleton) as being part of my pastoral role in the community. The role at the University was much less easy to define because the sense of boundary and community were of a different order. Although there is a geographic boundary to the University campus the majority of the community lives in the city or in the surrounding towns and villages. It seems to me that a key reason for my involvement in Christ Church (and for this research) is the exploration and resolution of these expectations regarding my role as an Anglican priest. I would argue, while I have undoubtedly framed my experience in this way, I am also responding to a role that others are expecting me to play. For instance, some people (staff and students) in the university consistently referred to me as "the Vicar" and those more familiar with the Church of England will comment that "The university is your parish". I found the expectation of a parish framework for my job existed within the diocese since early on in discussions with the Diocesan Secretary he suggested that the Chaplaincy Management Committee (CMC) was equivalent to my Parochial Church Council (PCC).

The first and most obvious difference from being an Anglican priest in Farnham was that, when I arrived in post at the University, there was little by way of a regular and committed congregation at the Chaplaincy. According to the service register there were four people at my predecessor's final service in December 1988 and although a service was offered during the intervening Spring and Summer terms no students came to it and only one occasional member of staff attended. In that respect I can recall being questioned about the Chaplaincy Centre in my interview for the job. During our time together as candidates there had been some disparaging comments about the building itself and when it was my turn to be questioned I was asked what I made of the centre. My response was to acknowledge these observations but to stress that, for me, having a physical building was crucial to my vision for

chaplaincy work – which I saw very much in terms of 'building' a community. Perhaps a fundamental question that lies behind this research is: to what extent can community models of Anglican priesthood be applied to a university chaplaincy? A second contrast, arising out of this, was between the idea of a PCC and the CMC as it existed at Bath. A church council is normally drawn from the worshipping community of the parish church however, if there is no worshipping community that cannot be the case. During my time at the university the CMC has been made up of people who have strongly supported the existence of the chaplaincy but not, by and large, its specific activities. From the comments made by those who had been members of the Chaplaincy Team before me I believe that such a situation was not unusual. In this respect the Management Committee seems to more readily take on the function of monitoring or overseeing the work of the Chaplain rather than being an initiator of Chaplaincy activity itself.

For me Nils Brunsson's distinction between action and political organizations (Brunsson 1989; Brunsson & Olsen 1993) was helpful in reconciling some of the expectations and experience that I had in this area and I shall discuss this further below in 2.3.<sup>1</sup> A third difference arose from a striking contrast I noted between my university role and that in a parish. The parish job was, in large part, with those aged 0-18 and 60+ often outside what might be called the "working day". Of course, there were exceptions to this but it was in striking contrast to the work in the University which was with those aged predominantly 18-60 within their working day although, again, there are exceptions. In this respect, I was struck by the sharp divide that existed between staff and students. I had envisaged that my role would encompass both but there was definitely an expectation at the University that the Chaplain was there to address the concerns of the students only. Conversely in the world of existing university chaplains this idea appeared to be absent and there was a strongly held view that chaplains were there for the staff

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<sup>1</sup> Marshak has made a similar distinction in his paper on organizational discourse, arguing that implicit in most management writing "are assumptions that signal the paramount importance of action over talk. There is, in short, a strong 'bias for action'. Characteristics of 'action', such as being observable, measureable, concrete, practical and specific, are routinely lauded over those associated with 'talk', which is considered to be more contextual, interpretative, elusive, abstract and emotional " (Marshak 1998: 16).

and the institution but not for the students. I recall going on a training conference for new chaplains and meeting some one who I thought would make an useful role model in terms of being a chaplain to students. This was challenged after he recounted his experience as a chaplain: "When I started the job I was shocked when Peter [the course leader] said, 'Of course, a chaplain isn't really for students but for the staff and the institution' but now I think he's got a good point." This proved a challenge to my understanding of chaplaincy ministry, since I saw myself as there for the institution, staff and students but was such a perspective to be unrealistic and unworkable?

## 2.3 Single Specification to Multiple Models

Having explored my sense of role disorientation in moving from the post of curate in a parish to chaplain in a university, I shall now examine some of the sensemaking 'signposts' and events that I encountered. At this point, it might be helpful to recall **Figure 2.1b** and my observation that all these contextual hermeneutic circles interact with one another. This account of some of the important written accounts for my sensemaking process begins with the details sent to prospective applicants and its lack of role definition. I will then discuss one of the major pieces of work produced on the role of Anglican university chaplains by Barry C. Morgan and then describe how that framed my understanding of the role. Since this narrative of 'textual' context takes us beyond the Chaplaincy mission during my second term in post, I shall need to return and discuss that in **2.4**.

An important 'signpost' in my sensemaking journey as University Chaplain was the details of the post which were set out as follows:

<p><b>The University.</b> Bath University has a student population of about 4000 and is situated close to the centre of the city. There are very strong links between the local community and the university and this also applies to the Christian congregations around. The Chaplaincy Team, which comprises most of the major denominations, work closely together in serving the University.</p>
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**The person we are looking for should possess the following qualities:**

Must be baptised and confirmed Anglican, male or female, preferably in orders.

- Someone with a sound faith and thorough grasp of the theological traditions of the Church. He/she will have a broad concept of mission which holds the tension between 'evangelism' and 'Kingdom of God' poles. That is to say, the Chaplain will see the ministry not only in relationship to individual students (caring, serving and evangelising) but also to the whole institution, looking for signs of God's kingdom in the University and working with all those who are concerned with issues of human dignity and worth.
- Thoroughly ecumenical in outlook and committed to ecumenical partnership in practice.
- A warm and accessible person, who likes young people, and who is able to relate to them in a relaxed rather than an over-directed fashion.
- Self-confident enough to move in many circles beyond their own sectional interests; the Senior Common Room, the porters, technicians, people from abroad, etc.
- Someone committed to working in a team with others, not only with members of the Chaplaincy team but also within the wider network of Christian staff and students.
- Someone who is able to sit with people who are on the edges of faith and none and who is able to listen to their doubts, fears and questions with sympathy and understanding.
- Someone with an understanding of evangelicals (the CU and other evangelical groups are very strong in Bath) and ready for a sympathetic and creatively critical work with them rather than the destructively competitive relationship that sometimes exists at Universities. There is to be a major ecumenical mission to the University in February 1990, led by Donald English, and the Chaplain will need to be in sympathy with this and work with those engaged in it.
- Someone who is sufficiently intelligent and articulate to be comfortable with academics. A good degree would be expected but we would not make it mandatory.
- An able leader of worship; there is a clear need to build up the corporate worship at the Chaplaincy, at present Sunday mornings and Thursday evenings.
- Someone willing to co-operate with people of other faiths, especially Muslims,

and to enable dialogue and mutual enrichment between Christians and other faiths.

According to Barry Chapman, an Anglican priest who works in the School of Physics and is a member of the Chaplaincy Team, this specification was drawn up by the chaplains and passed onto the Bishop of Bath and Wells. What was most significant about this document was that it was a person specification *not a* job description. There are some clues about how the job was conceived (e.g. "Someone with an understanding of evangelicals (the CU and other evangelical groups are very strong in Bath) and ready for a sympathetic and creatively critical work with them rather than the destructively competitive relationship that sometimes exists at Universities.") It seemed to me that these particulars were not enough to understand this new role and that it would be necessary to find a more detailed sensemaking context. This wider framework was provided by various reports into this area of the Church's ministry (Pye 1977, Niblett 1978, Partners 1980, Wright 1985, Clarke & Linzey) but, particularly by Barry C. Morgan's PhD thesis, *Anglican University Chaplains Concepts of Mission & Ministry 1950-1982*. Morgan's study remains a key piece of research in this field and it provided much of the contextual frame for my subsequent approach to sensemaking as University Chaplain at Bath. In his historical review of post-war developments in Anglican understanding of higher education ministry, Morgan proposes three models which can be called (i) pastoral, (ii) enabling and (iii) prophetic. The Management Committee at the Chaplaincy Centre went on to discuss five further models that will be outlined below. However, I propose to discuss Morgan's work in detail for two reasons. First, it provided the framework for developing this pluralistic approach to the work of the Chaplaincy, and second because some of the organizational tensions he identifies in terms of a chaplaincy's anomalous place in the Church were significant in framing the Chaplaincy Centre's Anglican link with Christ Church.

At one point, the Church of England had a monopoly over higher education and that monopoly was not merely over the spiritual welfare of students and staff, but over the whole system. In fact in order to teach in a university it was a requirement that you were ordained into the established church. This state of affairs was seriously challenged in the nineteenth century and new universities were founded to "free

higher education from ecclesiastical domination" (Partners 1980: 8). These civic universities such as Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester and Southampton were not based on the old monastic model of the collegiate community gathered around a chapel and often they were antagonistic towards any formal link with churches of any denomination. It was not until after the Second World War that chaplains were appointed to these institutions. From the mid to late nineteenth century, and for much of the twentieth century "the most noticeable expression of Christianity in English higher education was provided by the SCM and IVF" (Partners 1980: 8). The Student Christian Movement (SCM) and Inter-Varsity Fellowship (IVF) grew out of Christian Associations or Unions set up by students as a result of the nineteenth century evangelical revival.

An important element of the Church of England's ministry to the civic universities prior to the Second World War was the provision of church hostels or halls of residence, which would often be looked after by the vicar of a nearby parish (Morgan 1986: 32). However, this policy was reviewed by the Church of England in 1950 and as a result Morgan argues:

there was a fundamental change in policy in the Church's strategy in the 1950's. Hitherto, through its Hostels Committee, it had given support to Church halls of residence. By 1951 it had come to conclusion that this was not the best way in which the Church could promote its work in modern universities and that no more should be founded, and suggested instead the establishment of chaplaincy centres. (Morgan 1986: 13)

This approach carried the day to such an extent that, according to Morgan, the only church hall of residence remaining in England and Wales is the Church Hostel at University College, Bangor in which I lived in from 1978 to 1980. Instead the search was on to find what was thought to be a more appropriate style of Anglican ministry for the increasing number and increasing variety of higher education institutions and the emphasis would be on local responsibility and local initiatives (Morgan 1986: 160). Morgan's research into these models suggests three key models emerged up until the early 1980s — those of chaplain as pastor, enabler and prophet. First, a report from the Church of England's Council for Education in 1951 recommended that:

1. The provision of chaplains with some official status within the universities was the best way of forwarding the Church's work.
2. Where chaplaincy appointments were made there should be an adequate chaplaincy centre.
3. Chaplains should work in close co-operation with interdenominational societies especially the SCM. (Morgan 1986: 5)

There was a further Council for Education report in 1953 which, according to Morgan, stated that:

there was a Church of England clergyman charged with special responsibility for each of the universities and university college in the country and that these were responsible within the university in the same sort of way as an incumbent was for people within his parish. (Morgan 1986: 9)

As I have noted, to some extent this model was still being used when I was appointed in 1989 and wrote to the Secretary of the Diocese about some financial matters at the Chaplaincy. He stated very firmly that as far as finance was concerned the "Chaplaincy Management Committee is your PCC". By contrast, the Vicar in whose parish the University was built in the 1970s was never reconciled to the fact that the University was not part of his "patch" and that he was not the University's "vicar". He was in post until 1992, when he died, and although his parish only consisted of 600 people, his file was said by the then Rural Dean, the Revd Denys Goodman, to be the largest one at the Church Commissioners, due to his insistent and lengthy correspondence over this issue. Yet, according to Morgan, his position was entirely consistent with the Church of England's official position regarding universities up to and just after the Second World War:

As far as the universities were concerned, the Church had taken the line that they were in some incumbent's parish and came under his pastoral care. (Morgan 1986: 35)



However, it was the view of the Church of England that the rapid expansion of higher education in the 1960s and 70s and the fact that students were leaving their locality to study full-time made it increasingly unrealistic to expect the parish clergy in whose areas these institutions were located to take on the task of ministry to universities. Curiously, the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches, both of which operate a parish system, felt the need to make appointments which cut right across their organizational structure and appoint a full-time chaplain to each university. The Free Churches, with their system of "gathered" churches (which in some respects is less immediately localised than a parish system) continued to look for indigenous ministers to accept responsibility for students of their own denomination. This sharp contrast was subsequently to be a significant factor in my approach to the role of University Chaplain at Bath and the development of a link with a local Anglican church, but according to Morgan:

In appointing chaplains to universities, the church was putting into practice a point the Paul Report had made, namely, that with the expansion of the universities and technical colleges, they were no longer local institutions since their students were drawn from all over the country. This meant that the students who attended them did not live in their home parishes and as a result were isolated from their homes, families and local churches. The church needed to come to terms with this and the only way it could do so was by expanding university chaplaincy work. (Morgan 1986: 40)

There are undoubtedly some interesting questions over location here and it would be fascinating to examine the impact of this vast exercise in social engineering in comparison to the German system of higher education where students tend to remain at home with their families for this crucial period of their lives. However there may be other (and more long term) forces at work here. Anthony Russell has drawn attention to the development of the role of the clergy that went on at the same time as the emergence of chaplains as a sub-species of cleric. He argues that the nineteenth century was a formative time for the roles of the clergy:

In this period, the clergy took the emerging professions as their model and

reference group, and the role of the clergyman came to be shaped in its recognizably modern form. (Russell 1980: 6)

There is more of a hint of this when Morgan quotes from the files of the Chaplaincies' Advisory Group's discussions (dated 1964) about the need for chaplaincy work to be put on a full-time basis. They stress:

The need for this to be seen as a *real specialist ministry and not youth work applied to students*. It is ministry to staff and students who together make up one of the most significant and influential communities of the modern world. (Morgan 1986: 36, my italics)

This can be seen as part of a wider pattern of full-time specialised ministry for the forces in the Second World War and post war developments in hospitals and commerce. From his research Morgan concludes that there were essentially six reasons advanced at that time for having ordained, full-time chaplains in higher education:

1. The Anglican Church believes in an ordained ministry to ensure that the Word of God was preached and the sacraments were available in universities.
2. Every Christian community needs a particular person who can act as a focus for that group and build it up.
3. The chaplain would also be free to minister to those without any particular religious affiliation.
4. The chaplain provides continuity in a community that is very transient.
5. It is a pioneering ministry exploring links between different Christian groups.
6. A chaplain appointed to a university by the Church would have the freedom to criticise the institution when necessary.

However Morgan also points out that nowhere were all these arguments set out, discussed and argued through to a conclusion since "the Church tended to take for granted that people would see the need for appointing university chaplains" (Morgan 1986: 59). This development did not proceed without criticism and Morgan draws attention to six reasons against the clericalisation of the churches' approach towards universities.

- 1 It gave the Church the impression that it had settled its obligations to universities and no other involvement was necessary.
2. The appointment of chaplains could be seen as undermining the role of lay people (both staff and students).
3. This method assumes that the presence of God in an institution stands or falls on the appointment of a chaplain!
4. Chaplains could be regarded as "outsiders" by the university.
5. It might be perceived that the Church was involved in the world of education, not for its own sake, but for "what it could get out of it".
6. The Church could also be open to the charge of elitism by ministering to the richer and more influential sections of society.<sup>2</sup>

The tension between the clerical and the lay approaches to university ministry is clearly illustrated by the changed circumstances of the Student Christian Movement (SCM). The decline of this lay (and often student-led) movement has more or less corresponded to the rise in full-time chaplains based in chaplaincy centres and Morgan makes a strong case for the fact that "in the 1950's a clerical, denominational model of ministry was set up." (Morgan 1986: 84)<sup>3</sup> Morgan believes that underlying this approach towards the role of chaplain is the model of chaplain as parish priest which in turn is characterised by 5 key elements: (1) leading worship; (2) teaching the faith; (3) pastoral care of students; (4) nurturing vocations; (5) pastoral care of university staff. The problem of 'clericalisation' was one that I was constantly aware of at the Chaplaincy although, to be fair, some lay chaplains were equally prone to de-

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<sup>2</sup> A further problem could be added. In a conversation with a retired diocesan bishop who was visiting the University he noted how one of the chaplaincy teams in his former diocese had been prone to spend more time on working out how to be a team than on providing ministry to students which, as a result, tended to be done by local churches.

<sup>3</sup> In the 1990s it can be difficult to perceive the change and the decline of the SCM. It is best illustrated by Adrian Hastings' comment that in pre-1914 Britain (and pre-National Union of Students) of the 50,000 students in any form of higher education 10,000 were members of SCM! (Hastings 1987 [1986]: 88). At the University of Bath, the Anglican Society (which was the SCM affiliated group) had a membership of between 20 and 40 during 1989-1996. This was out of a total student population of around 5,000 and I have no reason to think that the proportionate numbers were greater in any other HE institution. By contrast Christian Union membership was usually over 100 at Bath during this period.

skilling students. There are connections at this point with my earlier discussion about the 'catalyst' and 'fellow pilgrim' models of ministry. In one chaplains' meeting a Free Church chaplain whose approach to ministry was strongly catalytic was sharply critical of the style of ministry employed by another Free Church chaplain who was much more of a fellow traveller. Some chaplains have distinct feeling that if they are not performing their professional duties they are failing in their role, even if that performance succeeds in de-skilling those around them.

It was against this background, Morgan argues, that alternative ideas for chaplaincy in higher education began to be explored. A new perspective emerged as the churches came to see the role of chaplains as one whereby they help all members of the Christian community exercise their vocations as Christian within the university community. In other words it was no longer the chaplain who offered his (or very occasionally her) solitary ministry to the institution, rather ministry was the task of all Christians within the university and the chaplain was called to equip that group of people for service and mission to the world of higher education.

This approach was not confined to the Anglican church, but was also reflected by the Methodist church (Morgan 1986: 118) and the official ecumenical body of the time, the British Council of Churches (Morgan 1986: 120f) but it was not without its critics. Certainly within the Anglican church, with its parish, system there was a strong feeling that:

there is no need for additional ordained people to exercise a particular ministry to such institutions, when the local parish priest already has the responsibility for the 'cure of souls' in a particular institution found within his parish. (Morgan 1986: 131)

Morgan argues that the two approaches of this period were actually pulling in opposite directions. On the one hand, chaplains were being urged to take on the role of enabler and supporter of the ministry of the whole people of God while, on the other, there was an increased focus on their role as *the* specialist ministers in a particular field, thus undermining the lay people who were already working in that area.

Significantly, nowhere is the role of minister to the institution worked out in detail or given a precise definition by the Church of England, though Morgan himself argues that it might be exercised in the following ways:

1. Encouraging the university to be what it should be, and live up to its own high ideals.
2. Interpreting the will of God to the university in any given circumstances.
3. As someone who is not employed by the university the chaplain is often in a good position to help the institution to see what effect such a place has on the people who work there.
4. Alerting the university to the effect that is having on the locality.
5. Helping staff to reflect on the content of the University's curriculum.
6. Being a 'link person' between different groups in the institution in which they work, and bringing people together for dialogue.
7. Enabling the university to understand, see and pursue the intellectual quest within a broader context than the immediate requirements of their particular discipline.
8. Interpreting the church to the university and the university to the church.

While drawing attention to some of the positive features of this understanding of ministry, Morgan points out this prophetic type of chaplaincy only came about in the 1970's when the age of majority had been reduced to 18 from 21 and suggests that this process was all part of chaplains negotiating themselves a new role within the institution:

This meant that chaplains and others could no longer be viewed as being in loco parentis as far as the students were concerned. This left chaplains with less influence and less work in their institutions, as they discovered that students who now regarded themselves as adults, no longer automatically turned to their elders for help, counsel and advice, but to their peers. Chaplains therefore cast around for another role and a new way of ministering to and influencing the institution arose. (Morgan 1986: 174)

This style of ministry is often referred to within the Church as "prophetic" (modelled on the prophets of the Christian Old Testament). However, as one biblical scholar pointed out to a chaplains' conference in the late 70's, such a role in the prophetic books is usually only taken on with great reluctance and after they have felt *compelled* to by the divine will.

Morgan states that in Church of England reports about specialist ministries, men and women seeking a role in 'secular' institutions are regarded not as having different *tasks*, but as exercising them in a different *context*. A parish priest will have a ministry based in a worshipping group set within a clear geographic area and often focused on the private and domestic sector of life, whereas a chaplain will be concerned about how the whole people's lives relate to their institutions and the goals and the values which those institutions embody.

However there is a problem with the terminology, according to Morgan. He argues that the word 'specialist' carries overtones that somehow the specialists are 'superior' to the parish priests, while the tempting analogy with the medical profession is extremely misleading. In the medical world, the word has carried connotations of the separation between GPs and hospital specialists who may often be seen as the 'experts'. While specialists in medicine might see those who are passed onto them for a consultation and specialist medical advice, that is not the case in the Church. University chaplains for instance, do not deal with people who have been passed onto them by parish clergy for examination by a specialist, but are dealing with people who are working in a specific environment, sometimes for a very short period of their lives.

In his research Morgan identifies six areas of tension between parochial clergy and university chaplains:

1. Chaplaincies are seen as breaking the normal church unit of the parish and producing conventicles or "para-churches".
2. University chaplains can be seen as an unnecessary luxury in times when parishes are hard pressed for money and for clergy.
3. There is sometimes a feeling amongst parochial clergy that sector ministers

- have opted out of the real life of the church.
4. The world of the university can be regarded as unreal and there is sometimes a view that students need to be earthed in a broader community than that of their peers.
  5. Sometimes liturgy in chaplaincies is very different from that used week by week in the parishes, and it is argued that students have difficulties making the transition from one to the other when they leave university.
  6. Chaplains rarely spend longer than five years in one post, nor do they often move to another chaplaincy position. Frequently they return to a parish, all of which fosters the impression that chaplaincy is an interruption in the "real" work of parish ministry.

In my experience these concerns are still felt by many higher education chaplains. However, one of the advantages that I found through the link with a local Anglican church was that such comments rarely came in my direction. Interestingly, Morgan identifies a further five areas of tension which he ascribes specifically to the role of "Anglican University Chaplain". These are:

1. The competing demands between supporting a specifically Anglican or ecumenical group and the need to be available for everyone.
2. The chaplain is part of two institutions - church and university - but very often the church regards him or her as on the fringes of its ministry because the chaplain is not in a parish; while the university is not sure what in what niche to put the chaplain because it is not usually the employer: "Thus a chaplain often finds himself being employed by one institution to work in another, with both institutions having different expectations about what his role and functions actually are. Neither of these expectations will necessarily fit in with how he views the job and he may be regarded with suspicion by both" (Morgan 1986: 198).
3. A chaplain maybe regarded with suspicion by staff employed by the university, especially if that person has been critical of the institution.
4. A chaplain does not necessarily have a congregation and may have to establish it. This manifests itself in a number of ways:
  - i) *In order to develop a congregation or a constituency it is necessary to*

*rally people but at the same a chaplain may want to challenge some of the expectations that they bring themselves.*

*ii) Students' needs change dramatically from first year to final year and it can be difficult to meet both sets of demands.*

*iii) Students move on just as they are maturing and relationships are developing and the sense of being "back at square one" can be very frustrating.*

5. A chaplain may often feel an "amateur" in a world full of "professionals". Morgan quotes one university teacher telling a chaplains' conference in the late 70s that she had the impression that chaplains did not quite know what their roles were.

Once again a link with a local Anglican church, such as the one that was developed with Christ Church can help address these matters *as well* – particularly: *Point 1* the competing demands of needing to make provision for everyone whilst also supporting an Anglican expression of higher education ministry; the issues under *Point 4* since there was a stable congregation that students could feel part of and relate to in different ways at different stages of their university life; and also with *Point 5* by continuing to discharge such 'professional' functions as baptisms, weddings and funerals a local link can mitigate some feelings of being an 'amateur'.

Essentially Morgan outlines three concepts of ministry which, he argues, have formed the basis of an Anglican approach to higher education in the post-war period. These approaches can be labelled: (i) 'pastoral', (ii) 'enabling' and (iii) 'prophetic'. As I have mentioned, in the next part of this section I shall consider the Chaplaincy's ecumenical mission held in 1990 (*Missing Piece*) but, in the academic year which followed this mission, the Chaplaincy Management Committee spent a number of meetings discussing future direction for the Chaplaincy. There was no clear consensus regarding future direction for the ministry of the Chaplaincy. The conversations at this time included the start of the Decade of Evangelism, uses of the Chaplaincy Centre and relationships between the different Christian societies together with the other religious groups. Some of the interchanges became rather heated, particularly between the Quaker chaplains and the Christian Union over the question of inter-faith worship. As a result I submitted a discussion document in the Spring of 1992 outlining



Morgan's three models of HE chaplaincy in an effort to put our debates and disagreements within a wider context which acknowledged our genuine diversity. In addition to the three concepts of ministry identified by Morgan (i) *the pastoral approach*; (ii) *the enabling approach*; (iii) *the prophetic approach*; I suggested four other models for the current range of activity at the chaplaincy:

- (iv) *A forum approach* – providing an arena for debate/discussion
- (v) *A welfare approach* – supporting the work of the welfare services
- (vi) *A mission approach* – evangelism of university & nurture of Christian group(s)
- (vii) *A culture approach* – marking the life of the University/providing resources & information about all faiths

A further category was added in the course of the paper being considered by the committee:

- (viii) *A community of prayer approach* – praying for the University, staff & students

At this point I found myself using a number of organizational metaphors to describe this carnivalesque diversity. The most common were these of 'the body of Christ' and 'the umbrella of the Chaplaincy'. In terms of Umberto Eco's metaphor of clothing (Roberts 1989 – Appendix 2) such language provided a lose-fitting, but common garment to clothe a most ungainly body. My natural inclination is to encourage people to be reflexive, which includes asking questions about the forms of language that we use in both everyday and specialist contexts. I can remember having to making a conscious decision *not* to ask people what they thought about these metaphors because if I did they might stop working. As Weick has noted, a key part of nurturing a community is maintaining the agreement not to speak about the ways in which its common language means different things to different members (Weick 1995: 107). With hindsight, it is clear to me that this decision arose directly from my experience of some events, which took place in the lead up to the Chaplaincy's ecumenical mission.

## 2.4 Missing Piece to Many Pieces

The pattern of contextual sensemaking which I have been following has been based on Anthony Thiselton's dialectic between a body of knowledge and embodied

experience that, in turn, leads to shared understanding. The following account will take the same approach towards the Christian Union's ***Doctrinal Basis*** but, in this case, the dialectic will be between my *a priori* 'theory' (which I wrote immediately before taking up the post of University Chaplain (V. S. Roberts 1992)) and my subsequent experience during *Missing Piece*. I shall briefly set out the details of the *Doctrinal Basis* and my four-fold approach to re-envisioning it through (i) An educational framework, (ii) A pastoral framework, (iii) A hermeneutic framework, and (iv) A social framework. Then I shall describe some of the discussion surrounding the request for a doctrinal basis for *Missing Piece* and the subsequent effect that had on my sensemaking for the Chaplaincy Centre (V. S. Roberts 1993, 1997).

The person specification for the post of University Chaplain discussed in 2.3 stated that the person appointed would be:

- Someone with an understanding of evangelicals (the CU and other evangelical groups are very strong in Bath) and ready for a sympathetic and creatively critical work with them rather than the destructively competitive relationship that sometimes exists at Universities. There is to be a major ecumenical mission to the University in February 1990, led by Donald English, and the Chaplain will need to be in sympathy with this and work with those engaged in it.

On a course for new chaplains in the Summer of 1989 it became clear that the tension highlighted by this statement was by no means unusual and it was generally recognised that the doctrinal basis used by many Christian Unions posed one of the key problems. Furthermore, the absence of any common ground between the Christian Union at Bath and the Chaplaincy was highlighted by some time that I spent at the University in June before taking up the post full-time in August. I met eight of the ten students who formed that year's CU Executive Committee and had what I perceived to be a positive discussion. However, when I asked: "What can the Chaplaincy do to help the CU?" There was a very stark reply from the CU President. He looked uncomfortable before replying: "Nothing." These two experiences provided the impetus to look in detail again at the UCCF Doctrinal Basis.

### 2.4.1 Reframing the UCCF Doctrinal Basis

The Basis itself is set down by the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship (UCCF) which co-ordinates, resources and encourages many of the Christian Unions in British higher education institutions. It sets out three aims for each CU, which are:

1. To extend Christ's Kingdom in the University.
2. To stimulate the faith of Christian students.
3. To promote interest in mission both home and abroad.

There is also a short, two point 'Basis of Belief, which affirms:

1. Faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour, Lord and God, whose atoning sacrifice is the only ground for salvation.
2. Belief in the final authority of Holy Scripture in all matters of faith and conduct.

Becoming a member of a Christian Union varies from place to place but, generally, anyone wishing to join must acknowledge allegiance to these aims and this basis of belief. In addition, anyone wishing to serve on the Executive Committee or speak at the meetings is usually required to sign the more thorough UCCF 11 point doctrinal basis<sup>4</sup> and the reasons for this arrangement were given as follows:

1. to provide firm and stable faith within the group
2. to enable effective evangelism
3. to promote genuine understanding of Christianity
4. to enable the group to be spiritually healthy (*Evangelical Belief*, 1988: 7-10)

Further stimulus for my re-examination of the doctrinal basis came from my initial understanding of the body metaphor as a trope which could affirm unity and diversity within Christianity and provide a means of overcoming past conflict. My re-examination of the Doctrinal Basis began with Donald Capps' book *Reframing: A New Method in Pastoral Care* in which he elaborated his understanding of the process

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<sup>4</sup> All 11 points of the UCCF doctrinal basis can be found in Appendix 4.

of 'reframing' as a method of counselling (Capps 1990). Capps frequently illustrates this technique with reference to stories, jokes and fables, for example:

During one of the nineteenth-century riots in Paris, the commander of an army detachment received orders to clear a city square by firing at the rabble. He commanded his soldiers to take up firing positions, their rifles levelled at the crowd. As a ghastly silence descended, he drew his sword and shouted at the top of his lungs: 'Ladies and gentlemen, I have orders to fire at the rabble. But as I see a great number of honest, respectable citizens before me, I request that they leave so that I can safely shoot the rabble.' The square was empty in a few minutes. (Capps 1990: 17)<sup>5</sup>

This idea of reframing provided a metaphor for re-appraising the doctrinal basis. It is significant for this study that my approach to this matter was both pluralist and embodied. I concluded my original paper with an affirmation of organizational plurality based on the metaphor of the body of Christ (Roberts 1992: 445) just as my earlier reflections on parish ministry had ended with an appeal for greater recognition of diversity rooted in the same image (V. S. Roberts 1989: 14). I shall set out my initial four-fold reframing, as it shows the approach that I thought I *would* adopt in the context of my work at the Chaplaincy Centre.

#### **A) The Educational Framework**

This frame drew on the work of the American educational theorist James Fowler who himself had extended Piaget's theories of child development into matters of faith. Fowler argues that it is possible to detect phases of faith in the human development process. He outlines six of these stages, which he calls:

1. Intuitive-Projective Faith
2. Mythic-Literal Faith
3. Synthetic-Conventional Faith

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<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of the complex social role of humour and its ability to re-order our perceptions of reality see Berger 1997.

4. Individuative-Reflective Faith
5. Conjunctive Faith
6. Universalizing Faith

Fowler's dominant metaphor is that of a journey as an individual proceeds through the different stages of faith development. Stage one is the faith of a person approximately 4-8 years old, in which meaning is made through intuitive trust and imitation of parents and primary adults. Stage two occurs roughly between 8 and 12, when a person more consciously joins their immediate group or faith community and enthusiastically begins to learn the lore, the language and the legends. For our purpose stages three, four and five are the key ones.

Fowler believes that the Synthetic-Conventional stage is typically found in adolescence but, significantly it can also become a permanent place of equilibrium for many *adults*. It is characterised by the fact that a person's faith now extends beyond the individual's immediate personal environment (usually the family). School, work, peers, family, street society, the media and, perhaps, religion may all become important; and the judgements of people in these areas take on a great deal of importance. Authority lies with those who hold traditional authority roles, or who are valued in a face-to-face group. So Fowler argues:

It is a 'conformist' stage in the sense that it is acutely tuned to the expectations and judgements of significant others and as yet does not have a sure enough grasp of its own identity and autonomous judgement to construct and maintain an independent perspective ... The emergent capacity of this stage is the forming of a personal myth – the myth of one's own becoming in identity and faith, incorporating one's past and anticipated future in an image of ultimate environment unified by characteristics of personality. (Fowler 1981: 172-73)

Stage four is where people begin to take responsibility for their own commitments, lifestyle, belief and attitudes. Having been sustained in identity and faith by a group, the individual now becomes conscious of his/her own boundaries and inner connections. The 'self' expresses this new understanding of its

environment with an explicit system of meanings. It is very much a demythologizing stage in which symbols are translated into firm concepts. However, as stories, symbols, myths and paradoxes from one's past begin to break up the neatness of this ideology, a person begins the next stage of the journey.

Conjunctive faith, the next point on Fowler's continuum, reunites the symbolic world of the mythic and conventional stages with the cognitive element of the reflective stage. One's past must be reclaimed and re-examined. An individual is alive to paradox and truth in apparent contradictions. This stage strives to hold these opposites together. Fowler argues that this stage is unusual before mid-life, but this may be underestimating the case. Certainly, some people seem to be aware of tensions and paradoxes in Christianity from a much younger age, and succeed in holding them together.

Working with Fowler's analysis has clear implications for the UCCF doctrinal basis. Far from being an anomaly within Christianity, it can be seen as part of the natural process of religious development within human beings. The Synthetic-Conventional Faith, the sort of faith represented by the doctrinal basis, is a vital staging post on the religious journey, and it is one that allows people to begin the process of appropriating faith for themselves. As Fowler notes, it can be a stage from which people find difficulty in moving on, but rather than denying the validity of this experience, the pastoral task of those in higher education ministry must surely be to encourage people on and into the next phase.

Fowler comments that one of the factors contributing to the breakdown of stage three and the transition to stage four is the experience of leaving home:

This can precipitate the kind of examination of self, background, and life-guiding values that gives rise to stage transition at this point. (Fowler 1981: 172-73)

A complicating factor is that the experience of leaving home can be both the catalyst for people to *leave* stage three, but also the spur for people to *enter* it. Although Fowler is not the only person to propose a developmental approach to

religious belief (e.g. Goldman 1965; Westerhoff 1980)<sup>6</sup> his ideas have played a significant role in several reports for the Church of England's General Synod (*Children in the Way* 1988; *How Faith Grows* 1991; *Youth Apart* 1996). In addition, a parallel line of thought has emerged under a management heading, as William Torbert has applied Piaget's developmental ideas to organizations and the personal transformations of those in leadership roles (Torbert 1987, 1991; Fisher & Torbert 1995). Significantly, in their discussion of developmental learning in organizations Fisher and Torbert outline a similar sensemaking dialectic to Thiselton's when they state that organizational discovery takes place:

not by reading any particular book or by legislating any particular policy in a general way, but by practising in the direction of such a community in our family, religious and working lives. (Fisher & Torbert 1995: 208)

I shall outline the form of embodied, communal practice which emerged in the Chaplaincy Centre at Bath in Section 5 (5.3.2) but, as Fisher & Torbert also observe, an important part of this process is using organizational dilemmas as means of reflecting on "self and others" (Fisher & Torbert 1995: 260). This development of the sensemaking 'story' can involve a reframing of that which is reframed.

## **B) The Pastoral Framework**

The second frame, while being much more straight forward, is something that can often be forgotten by those who are already settled within a university — that is, the process of moving is often one of the most stressful times in our lives and the loss of one's support network can be a profound bereavement. In other words:

At a pastoral level, the doctrinal basis helps to create an important support group for people who are going through a period of rapid change. It is significant that when this immediate need falls away after their time in higher education, a large proportion of people move away from this style of faith and churchgoing, either to a new style or, more often than not, to

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<sup>6</sup> Though see Moran 1987 for criticism of this metaphor.

no style whatsoever. (Roberts 1992: 440)

### **C) The Hermeneutic Framework**

This addresses what is perhaps the key issue with the doctrinal basis — the belief stated under point c) in 'the divine inspiration and infallibility of Holy Scripture'. The word 'infallible' is the cause of many problems between Christian Unions and other Christian groups but it is important to be clear about the *nature* of those difficulties. First, it is worth noting Umberto Eco's description of the Bible as a 'beautiful case of unlimited semiosis' and that:

The Scriptures had potentially every possible meaning, but their reading had to be governed by a code, and that is why the Fathers proposed the theory of allegorical senses. (Eco 1990: 12)

On this basis I suggested that:

We all have a set of rules for 'decoding' the Bible, or guidelines for taming Scripture and, ultimately, for taming God. (Roberts 1992: 442)

Thus, it is important to recognize that it is not just the CU who impose limits on interpretation but that all groups within the Church have done and continue to do so. Second, having acknowledged this, the next problem is the nature of 'problems'. This was focused for me by Eden, Jones & Sims' analysis of the nature of problems within organizations. They suggest that problems are things people become strongly attached to and therefore we have a significant amount of choice in which problems we embrace.<sup>7</sup> As a result, on the matter of the doctrinal basis, I concluded with the optimistic assertion that it was 'perfectly possible to choose *not* to make it a problem' (Roberts 1992: 442). This approach was to be challenged by the request for a doctrinal basis for *Missing Piece*.

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<sup>7</sup> "In some cases problems can be quite private possession, quite personal things, and it has been said that in some cases to solve a person's problems may be nothing short of robbery. What may be a problem to one person may be part of their identity in their working world to another." (Eden, Jones & Sims 1983: 21)



## **D) The Social Framework**

In this process of reframing the doctrinal basis my underlying (but, until the end of the paper, unacknowledged) metaphor of the 'body' was perhaps most clearly present in discussing the views of Robin Gill and Charles Handy. Gill's perspective was that the competing convictions of the various Christian denominations had harmed the churches and contributed to their decline (Gill 1989, 1993). By contrast the position outlined by Handy, from his analysis of voluntary groups, was to encourage diversity within such organizations and a federal approach to voluntary groups. The metaphor he uses to illustrate his ideas is the shamrock (Handy 1988, 1989). In this respect, I sided with Handy in affirming diversity and arguing that the Church:

has the most enormous potential to be a dynamic federation. Instead of seeing differences as weaknesses they should be viewed as a strength and they should be respected. Surely this is one of the things Paul is driving at with his image of the Body of Christ (an image mentioned explicitly in the doctrinal basis). (Roberts 1992: 444)

My conclusion to that paper, which was very much a 'work in progress', contained the question: Is it possible to celebrate our diversity while at the same time affirming our unity? Or, in the words of Fisher & Torbert would it be possible to establish such a practice as a community? And if so, what sort of community might that be? These "In some cases problems can be quite private possession, quite personal things, and it has been said that in some cases to solve a person's problems may be nothing short of robbery. What may be a problem to one person may be part of their identity in their working world to another." (Eden, Jones & Sims 1983: 21) were the challenges to be faced in and through the Chaplaincy mission, *Missing Piece*.

### **2.4.2 Missing Piece**

*Missing Piece* was a mission organised at the University of Bath with the stated aim of involving all the student Christian societies and encouraging them to work together. The Chaplaincy at this time was a partnership of Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Quaker, Roman Catholic and United Reformed churches. There were a number of student societies linked at least nominally to a particular denomination (i.e.

Anglican, Baptist, Methodist and Roman Catholic plus a number of non-denominational student societies (i.e. the Christian Union, Christians in Sport and the Chinese Christian Fellowship). In this respect, one of the reasons given for the choice of the Methodist minister the Revd Dr Donald English as the main speaker (a decision taken before I was appointed) was that he had signed the UCCF doctrinal basis and was therefore seen *as* 'acceptable' to the CU. In the earliest stages of planning there had been little discussion about having a doctrinal basis for the week of events, however in the minutes of a meeting of the mission committee in October 1989 it is noted that one of the representatives from the CU felt that the mission needed a doctrinal basis to undergird it and proposed the following format:

<p><b>We believe in:</b></p>
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- *the Holy Scriptures, as originally given, to be inspired, the only infallible Word of God.*
- *one God, eternally existent in three Persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*
- *the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, His sinless life, His miracles, His vicarious and atoning death on the Cross, His bodily resurrection, His ascension to the right hand of the Father, His mediatorial work, and His personal return in power and glory.*
- *the universal sinfulness and guilt of all mankind since the Fall, rendering man subject to God's wrath and condemnation.*
- *redemption through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, which are absolutely essential for the salvation of lost and sinful man.*
- *the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.*
- *the resurrection of both the saved and the lost: those that are saved to the resurrection of life and those that are lost to the resurrection of damnation.*
- *the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, who comprise the Church which is His Body.*

The mission committee had representatives from all the different Christian societies – Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Roman Catholic as well as from the Christian Union –

and there was no consensus for this proposal. Instead, as chair of the planning committee, I volunteered to draw up a statement of common belief for the next meeting. My proposal was as follows:

**As Christians we wish to share our beliefs based on the following common faith:**

- *As Christians we believe that all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, refuting error, correcting and training in righteousness.*<sup>8</sup>
- *Our mission should be firmly grounded in Holy Scripture and God's revelation in Christ.*
- *God is one, but revealed in the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*
- *Jesus Christ, as the way the truth and the life, provides the example for our Christian journey, through his life, his teaching, his death and his resurrection.*
- *We live in a world that has lost sight of its creator and stands in need of God's means of redemption through Jesus' death on the cross and the empty tomb.*
- *Our faith has been revealed through scripture, set forth in the historical creeds and continues to be inspired by the Holy Spirit.*
- *The Church is the Body of Christ and as part of that body we must respect each other's faith in God; recognizing that the Holy Spirit leads us to fulfil different functions in that body, while sharing our unity in Christ.*

In some respects these two statements of faith reflect Weick's earlier observation that an important part of community and organization is not asking about the ways in which language means different things to different people. He goes on to underscore the importance of "strategic ambiguity", which "allows people to maintain the perception that there is agreement, when in fact there is not" (Weick 1995: 120). In other words, there is need for linguistic "slack", which enables people who disagree to maintain the perception that there is consensus.

As long as people are not pressed to articulate their individual understanding of these connections, there is consensus, and people act

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<sup>8</sup> This, of course, is a quote from 2 Timothy 3: 16.

together as if they are bound together by a well-developed paradigm.  
(Weick 1995: 120)

The aim of the first doctrinal basis is to establish clear ideological agreement for the mission based on an evangelical understanding of Christianity. By contrast, the second is a response to group diversity and seeks to provide enough common ground for a number of different Christian perspectives to work on a single project. In Weick's terms the second statement of faith provided sufficient organizational 'slack' for the mission to go ahead and allowed each group to articulate their own understanding of each phrase. The person who wished for a more evangelical statement of faith for the mission resigned from the planning group and *Missing Piece* but the other members of the Christian Union remained and we went ahead using the second statement. This was a *de facto* recognition of the plurality of groups involved. Thus it was significant that the metaphor of the body of Christ is used in the first doctrinal basis to underscore 'the spiritual *unity* of believers' (consensus) whereas as in the alternative proposal it highlights the '*different* functions in that body' (diversity).

This experience was to help shape my fundamental understanding of the Chaplaincy as a diverse organization and that my role as the University Chaplain was to supervise and maintain the organizational 'slack' which was needed between the groups. It is significant that behind my use of the phrase 'different functions in that body' in the second statement stood the work of Nils Brunsson who had been writing about the responses of modern organizations to the inconsistent demands that they receive from their environments (Brunsson 1989). He suggests that there are generally two responses to this situation: action organizations and political organizations, which embody a dialectic of consensus and conflict.

#### **A) Action Organizations**

These respond to the competing needs of their environment in the following way:

- **Firm agreement** — Conflict is bad for an action orientated organization and it tries to avoid it, because everyone needs to be pulling in the same direction. This will often be done through a strong hierarchy.

- **Strong organizational ideology** — This again cuts down conflict, and also restricts freedom of action and thought. While it may sound like 'Big Brother', its intention is to enable people to behave in such a way as to generate organised action.
- **Consistency** — The ideology and the action must be in harmony with each other. The action will reflect the talk and decisions in the organization. There is no occurrence of one thing being *decided* and another thing being *done*.
- **Specialization** — The action ideology will be precise, complex and consistent; and therefore only concerned with a limited section of reality. The number of possible actions is very restricted.
- **Solutions Focused** — The organization is geared to solutions rather than problems
- **Confidence** — Action is easier when the organization is confident and when people are convinced their view of the world is the right one. Again, conflict is a hindrance.
- **Limited Rationality** — The action organization needs a simplified model of reality and how it functions within that model. Complicated models and critical approaches do not help action.

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## B) Political Organizations

These offer a different model of responding to the same set of circumstances:

- **Output** — the 'product' of the political organization is not necessarily tangible. Its essential output is decisions or words. The political organization reflects a complex environment which is full of inconsistent ideas and competing convictions.
- **Embraces several ideologies** — Different opinions can be embraced, even exploited. The abundance of ideologies encourages criticism and debate, which in turn means that these organizations should be better than action organizations at understanding a complex and change-prone world.
- **Follows norms of rational decision-making** — conflict is accommodated in its decision making and can discuss several alternative possible solutions.
- **Problem-centred** — Insoluble problems are a very good means of reflecting many different ideas and values, and can be approached from all sorts of angles.

- **Generalises rather than specialises** — 'any political organization that wants to grow... will actively seek to incorporate new ideas in the environment into its own organization. No group need be left outside its domain. The organization grows by reflecting an increasing number of inconsistencies.' (Brunsson 1989: 23)
- **Mistrust and scepticism are encouraged** — Freedom of ideas is not curtailed by pressure for co-ordinated action. In this sort of organization part of its task is to criticise the status quo.
- **Produces ideologies** — apart from producing decisions (as opposed to action), the political organization is also good at producing and promoting ideology. And one of the strong ideological outputs of organizations is talk.

A similar, dialectical approach to churches as organizations has been outlined by Carl S. Dudley who argues that contrasting attitudes to the story of the Fall in Genesis have helped to produce two different attitudes to the world and, consequently two different theologies of the Church — relational and rigorous (Dudley 1982; see also V. S. Roberts 1997b).<sup>9</sup>

In my post-mission reflections I set out a case for a connection between the ideas of Dudley and Brunsson in that Christian groups which had 'action' characteristics were

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<sup>9</sup> The characteristics of *Relational Faith* are: (i) Faith is discovered *within a* believing community (symbolized in infant baptism); (ii) Community consciousness precedes individuality; (iii) In a world created good, group life provides a place to shed the exterior pressures of the world, and to celebrate oneness in Spirit; (iv) Land, family and geographic community form the physical foundation through which faith is shared; (v) Relational faith is sustained by a sense of tradition and a flow of events evoking a sense of permanence; (vi) God is 'felt' to be in the midst of the community, identified with people, places and particular ways of doing things. (God is **immanent**.) While the characteristics of *Rigorous Faith* are: (i) Faith begins when the believer qualifies by acknowledging his or her need for God; (ii) The community is composed of individuals who work together for individual rewards and a common end; (iii) In a world of evil people, believers must struggle to restrain sin and create a better future; (iv) Individual effort and tireless productivity provide evidence that faith is genuine; (v) Rigorous faith prepares for change and finds satisfaction in measuring its gains; (vi) God is beyond time and space. (God is **transcendent**). Cf Stephen Sykes' discussion of Christianity as a dialectic between its inner and outer manifestations of faith (Sykes 1984; see also my discussion of Sykes in 5.2.2 below.)

also likely to have a 'rigorous' faith while churches which were 'political' often had a 'relational' faith. Furthermore, I argued that some of the tensions between Christian Unions and University Chaplaincies could be seen in these terms (V. S. Roberts 1993, 1997b). To take Brunsson's terminology, a Chaplaincy may be ministering to people of very different outlooks, for example:

to conservative Roman Catholics, evangelical Methodists, radical Quakers and those who are not committed to any one denomination. In this respect, a chaplaincy can often seem very 'fuzzy' to an action-orientated person. From an action perspective, there may be no apparent strategy, no clear ideology and no firm product at the end of things. (V. S. Roberts 1997b: 272)

On the specific question of the doctrinal basis for *Missing Piece*, although the Christian Union itself never officially took part, many individual members did. Thus, the mission itself did manage to bring together many of the diverse strands of Christianity to work for a whole week with each other. Since that was one of its main aims it could be judged a success. However, the hope that a number of people in the Chaplaincy had, that this mission would lead to a new era of ecumenical co-operation between the different groups was not realised as, afterwards, the different Christian societies merely returned to their established patterns of working. One of the main outcomes from this interaction between 'text' and 'experience' was on my sensemaking understanding of the role of University Chaplain. I came to see the Chaplaincy in Brunsson's terms, as a dialectical organization with 'action' and 'political' aspects. I would argue that a similar case could be made for Mellor & Shilling's 'banal' and 'sensual' social bodies. In the organizational context of the Chaplaincy both of these (to some extent) contradictory elements need to be nurtured and affirmed. I concluded that the University Chaplain and the University Chaplaincy needed to function as both an action organization and a political organization. I shall discuss this further in Section 5 (5.3.2) but it will be helpful to discuss two aspects of this development at this point as they contribute towards understanding the emergence of the Chaplaincy's Anglican link with Christ Church.

### **2.4.3 Towards the Chaplaincy as a Dialectical Gestalt**

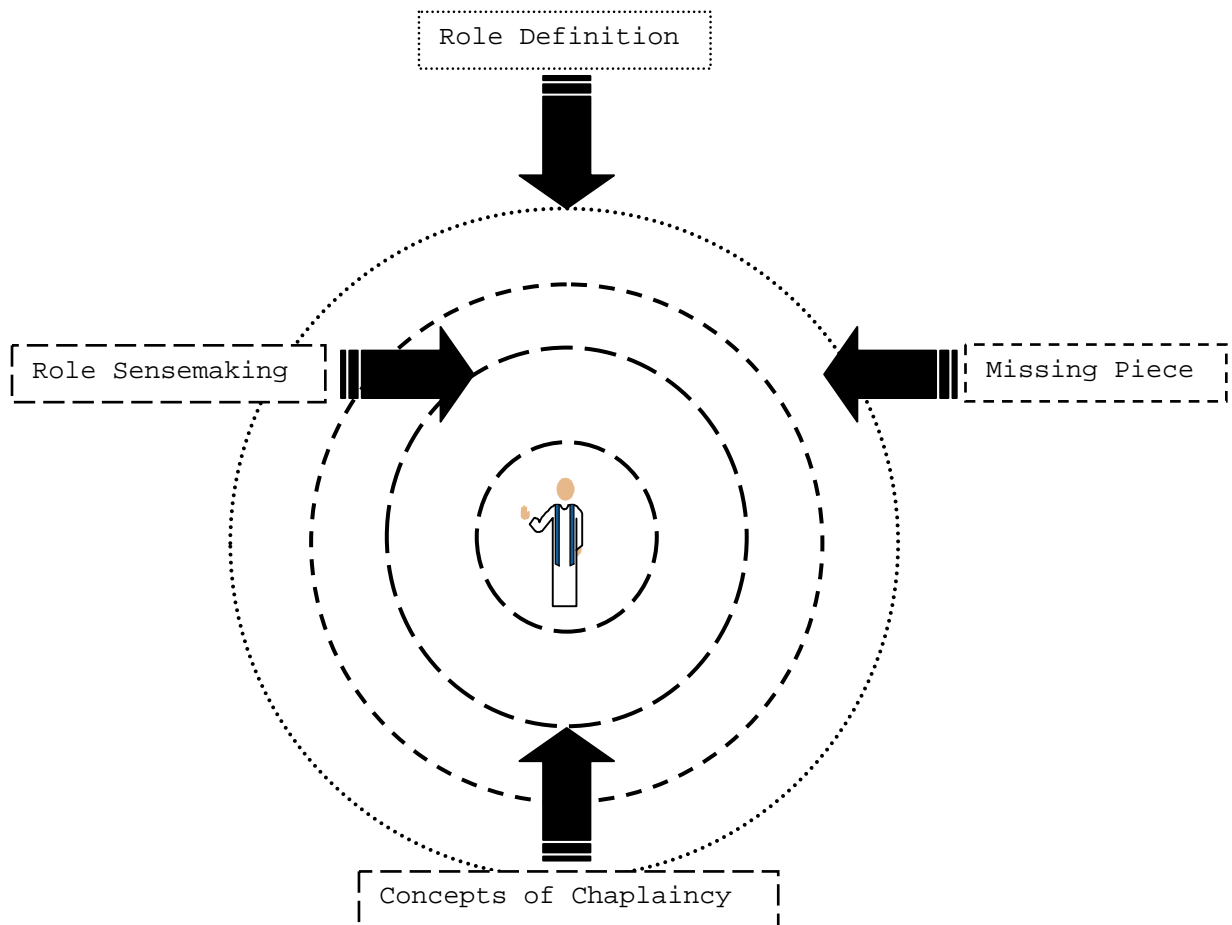
It was on the basis of the dialectic perspectives about groups and organizations, such as those outlined by Brunsson and Dudley, that I felt comfortable in accepting an invitation to speak at the CU in the academic year 1993/94 and signing their 11 point doctrinal basis. My reasoning was as follows. If I was to support the Chaplaincy as a dialectical gestalt which, from an organizational perspective, affirmed the 'action' and 'political' natures of such organizations then I needed to engage with all groups in this process including the Christian Union. Second, if I uphold the value of 'action' organizations within such a dialectic then I must uphold their constituent elements such as their ideological frameworks. I think it is perfectly possible to do this while, at the same time, also having reservations about how such ideology is used. After all, no group or individual can claim to hold a non-ideological position and it is part of my epistemological framework that every ideology ('self') is encouraged to be open to critique ('other'). Third, since I grew up within the evangelical wing of the Church of England I am aware that this ideology was, and is, part of my understanding of 'self'. Finally, some words used in the existing UCCF Doctrinal Basis (see Appendix 4), such as "infallibility", are of such a positivist turn of phrase that I cannot give them any credible meaning.

I was asked to speak on Colossians 3: 16 "Let the gospel of Christ dwell among you in all its richness; teach and instruct one another with all the wisdom it gives you. With psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, sing from the heart in gratitude to God." And the text of my talk is given in Appendix 13 for the reader to form an independent judgement of its content. What I believe is significant is that signing the doctrinal basis made little difference to my relationship with the CU, which certainly remained less close than with other student groups. My experience was that relations were warmer with me personally when an Anglican was president but since I did not see my role as in any way being 'their' chaplain that was not a particular concern. My priority was maintaining the healthy diversity of groups on campus and a creative dialectic between those that were relational/rigorous (Dudley); action/political (Brunsson); banal/sensual (Mellor & Shilling) and I shall discuss this process further in Section 5. However it is worth noting that it was



against this background of affirming diversity that my talk to the Christian Union encouraged them to acknowledge their *own* embodied diversity.

It is helpful at this point to return to the diagram with which I started (2.1). This set out the contextual hermeneutic circles of my sensemaking process as University Chaplain.



The broken lines become less broken as the circles progress inwards indicating that as I progressed from a relatively uncertain role definition things became clearer but always remained subject to change and revision. This dialectical understanding of the Chaplaincy and of my role as University Chaplain, which emerged through this sensemaking reflection upon my 'lived experience', was important in framing my relationship with Christ Church. There is a parallel between the dialectic identified under this heading (2.4) and that identified under the previous one (2.3) i.e. between the roles being a University Chaplain (a 'political' role) and an Anglican Chaplain (an 'action' role). It was in the context of this dialectical perspective of higher education

chaplaincy that the links with Christ Church developed and that forms the final part of this account of my initial sensemaking journey as University Chaplain.

## 2.5 The Link with Christ Church

Section 2.2 has set out some of the background to the tensions which exist in Anglican ministry to higher education and suggested eight models which are available to assist sensemaking in this sphere. Section 2.3 describes some of my experience of the way in which organizational dialectic can manifest itself in that context. How is it possible for a University Chaplain to reconcile these conflicting dynamics? An important 'break-through' moment for me came with some ideas that I have already referred to. The work by Colin Eden, Sue Jones and David Sims on the nature of problem construction radically reshaped my approach to these matters (Eden, Jones & Sims 1983). The notion that 'problems' are things that we create rather than having a reified existence meant that throughout this time I was also looking for alternative perspectives and ways of framing these difficulties. Although the idea itself was not new, it seemed to me that the idea of a local 'link' church might be a promising development. Both the free churches and the Christian Union were already using this idea. I have already outlined the staff links which existed between the University of Bath and Christ Church. In addition, there was another unusual link since, as I have already noted, both the Christ Church and the Chaplaincy Centre were organizational anomalies from an Anglican perspective.

To some extent, my contact with Christ Church, Julian Road, Bath begins with my appointment to the post of University Chaplain at the University of Bath in February 1989. In the month after my acceptance of the job I received the following letter:

24.3.89

Dear Vaughan,

This is to wish you well in your new appointment. I hope that you will be happy in Bath. We shall look forward to meeting you. Clifford Burrows, who is an NSM and a Professor at the University and Bernard Silverman (another Professor) both worship regularly at Christ Church, as do a few

post-graduates and under-graduates. I hope we can build on this link.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

Marcus.

'Marcus' is Rev Marcus Braybrooke who was Officiating Minister at Christ Church when I arrived in Bath to take up my new post.

There were a number of other practical reasons for developing this link. The first goes back to the person specification for the University Chaplain who was required to be:

- *An able leader of worship; there is a clear need to build up the corporate worship at the Chaplaincy, at present Sunday mornings and Thursday evenings.*

When I arrived at the Chaplaincy Centre in the summer of 1989 it had no congregation and had not had one for the two prior terms. During that first academic year a small nucleus of a group gathered around the ecumenical eucharist each Sunday. However as I began to plan with that group for the next academic year it became clear that those returning to the university would follow the usual pattern in Bath of only living on campus for their first year and living in town for their second and final years. The service started at 10.30am and the first bus did not leave the town *centre* until 10.30am. It was not possible to move the service later as there was a well-established Roman Catholic Mass at 12 noon. From these two factors – the crucial absence of a worshipping community and the rather more prosaic fact that service times and bus times did not match up – I began to think about how the chaplaincy was organised and whether it would be possible to arrange things better.

The idea of an Anglican 'link' between Christ Church and the Chaplaincy Centre emerged out of conversations with my ecumenical colleagues. Those from a Free Church background with responsibility for a church in the town expressed frustration that the only corporate worship was on a Sunday when they had other commitments while two comments from the Roman Catholic chaplain, Fr Brian McEvoy, were very

significant in experimenting with the Christ Church link. First, he was aware that although he' had between 30-50 students attending his midday Mass he saw very few of those after that first year until he sat on the platform at the degree congregations and watched them graduate. His comment was that once Catholic students moved into town, "if they keep going to mass, then they tend to do so at a church in Bath." Second, he also noted that of the ecumenical partners involved in the chaplaincy the Church of England was the only denomination not to have some sort of centre in the town and he felt that Anglican contact with students suffered as a consequence. From those comments I began to explore the idea of a 'link' church.<sup>10</sup> One of the advantages of Christ Church was that it was in the same road as the Catholic Chaplaincy in Bath and close to the Methodist link church. In a paper dated June 1990, to members of the Chaplaincy Management Committee I set out the problems with the Sunday Eucharist under five headings and suggested a course of action:

***Factors which make a Sunday morning service difficult:***

**1. With students**

- i There is a strong desire to worship off-campus with a regular congregation and not in a group composed almost entirely of students.
- ii It is at a time set by patterns of worship in parish churches not by patterns of student life. The 12.00 [Roman Catholic] mass scores in that respect. Also, because of the Mass, it's not possible to have the service later in the morning.
- iii Understandably, once students (and staff) have left campus there's a reluctance to return "after-hours". This is shown by the whole pattern of the University which is 9.00-6.00, Monday-Friday.
- iv It is difficult for 2nd/3rd years to get back for the service unless they have their own transport since the first bus up on a Sunday doesn't leave until 10.30am.

**2. With staff**

Staff and their families are involved in their local churches at the weekend. There is not a large natural staff community "local" to the Chaplaincy as there might be in Collegiate Universities for example.

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<sup>10</sup> Mintzberg notes that: "Innovative strategies seem to result from informal processes — vague, interactive and above all orientated to the synthesis of disparate elements. No management process is more demanding of holistic, relational thinking than the creation of an integrated strategy to deal with a complex, intertwined environment." (Mintzberg 1989: 53).

### **3. With a Eucharist**

The service of Holy Communion is an "exclusive" service. You have to be part of the committed to take part fully and it is not a service that draws in those on the edge or who are just beginning their exploration of Christianity.

### **4. With the ecumenical Angle**

- i. A weekly Sunday morning communion service is very much part of the Anglican and Roman Catholic traditions but not so much in the Free Churches.
- ii. A Sunday morning service is difficult for other Chaplains to attend because of their important commitments with local churches

### **5. A personal note**

My family, particularly Becky and Jon, are finding that they are missing people of their own age in the congregation on Sundays. I feel it is unfair to ask them to make this sacrifice for the next 4 years or so. Therefore they would need to find somewhere else to worship on Sunday mornings.

The paper proposed that the chaplaincy run a mid-week ecumenical eucharist while encouraging students and staff to find a worshipping home in local churches (with the exception of the Roman Catholics who would continue to have Sunday Mass on campus). This was accepted and has, from my perspective, worked well. It is significant that although Christ Church does not have a *specific parish* it does have a *local, eucharistic community* and the Chaplaincy Centre's link with a local Anglican church can be seen as helping to address the six specific areas of tension which Barry Morgan identified between parochial and specialist clergy.<sup>11</sup> My experience is that even the issue of breaking parish boundaries is less of an issue in a town or city where people often cross several parishes to worship at a church of their choice. In addition, the link with Christ Church has given a number of other benefits not originally

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<sup>11</sup> See above **2.3: (i)** Chaplaincies are seen as breaking the normal church unit of the parish; (ii) University chaplains can be seen as an unnecessary luxury in hard times; (iii) There is sometimes a feeling that sector ministers have opted out of the life of the church; (iv) The university can be regarded as unreal and it is also felt that students need to be earthed in a broader community than that of their peers; (v) Sometimes chaplaincy liturgy is different from that in the parishes, and students have difficulties in making the transition from one to the other, (vi) Chaplains rarely spend longer than five years in one post usually returning to a parish which gives the impression that chaplaincy is an interruption in the "real" work of parish ministry.

envisaged:

1. it provides a continuing link for students who stay in the city and for those who come back to visit.
2. Christ Church can become the worshipping home for occasional offices arising from the University in a way that the Chaplaincy could not.
3. the local base has allowed students to share in the life of city, through groups and people associated with the Christ Church.
4. it is unlikely that the post of Lay Assistant at the Chaplaincy would have come into being without the support of Christ Church. (See **3.5** for further discussion of the background to this development.)

The church itself has been largely positive about the link with the Chaplaincy and has, at various times, sought to place the arrangement a more formal footing. Thus, the secretary to the Church Council wrote to the Bishop of Bath & Wells:

The link with the University enriches our worship without in any way excluding other churches. As the appointment of the Chaplain lies with you as Bishop, in consultation with the University, we would like to suggest that the Chaplaincy Management Committee be involved in considering other plans. (Letter to the Bishop of Bath & Wells from Jo John, Secretary to the Church Council, dated 5th September 1992)

Though it is also fair to say that there were others at Christ Church who had reservations about a link with the University. However, starting an Anglican link between the Chaplaincy Centre and Christ Church proved to be relatively easy compared to the organizational storm which was brewing around Christ Church's future.

## 2.6 Conclusion

This section has set out some of my early experiences as University Chaplain and how they shaped my approach to a role that is very fluid and varies from place to place. It is very much down to each person to discover and create the job for him or herself, as

Barry Morgan has noted:

A great deal will depend on the personalities of the different chaplains involved and on the kind of chaplaincies they operate. Inevitably each person brings to the task his or her own personality and gifts and each university influences and shapes the way a chaplain's job is done according to its own tradition and resources. (Morgan 1986: 141)<sup>12</sup>

In other words, as I argued in Section 1, the hermeneutics of self are an important factor in the organizational hermeneutics. I suggested in my introduction that narrative, poetry and conversation would be an important part of my sensemaking process. In my role as University Chaplain I believe that they combined in the following way. As I have indicated in my two articles on higher education chaplaincy (Roberts 1992 and 1997) the underlying metaphor that I used for the Chaplaincy was that of the body. This was the hermeneutic image which held together the dialectic of unity and diversity or, in Brunsson's terms the action and political sides of the organization. The body metaphor provided enough space for those whose links with the Chaplaincy Centre were loose and gave some sense of cohesion for those who had a sense of Chaplaincy identity. Of course, there were still those who found this approach either too confining or too lax but, for myself, I found that this model enabled me to manage the organizational tensions and conflicts which ensued.

The underlying poetic metaphor then gave birth to the various forms of individual and communal narrative which gave shape to the 'body'. These took various forms. First, there were the written kind. The most successful of these was *The Chaplaincy News* which was published weekly during term time. The original print run was 30 but over time it grew to be circulated to well over 600 staff and students each week and we were in the process of developing an internet version when I left. It gave details of

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<sup>12</sup> A similar point has been made in N. A. M. Roger's social history of the Georgian navy. He describes the navel chaplain's position "was an awkward one. Socially he was an inactive landman among busy seamen-, his doubtful pretensions to gentility left him no comfortable home among either commissioned or warrant officers, and his actual duties were far from clear ... To what extent he could discharge a genuinely spiritual role afloat depended entirely on the quality of the man and the attitude of his captain." (Roger 1988: 23-24 )

activities in the Chaplaincy Centre, in the University and at the various link churches. Students could ask for it to be delivered to their departments when they registered with the University and during Freshers' Week. A second publication called *Chaplaincy Update* was produced for by graduates of the University for graduates of the University as a way of keeping them in touch with the Chaplaincy after they left. This was developed in conjunction with the appeal to honorary graduates for the Lay Assistant project (see 3.5) and proved to be a very good way of reviewing the past year for current staff and students as well. Finally we tried what I still believe was a useful project called *Signposts* (see Appendix 12). This reproduced some of the interesting, specialist articles from the journals in the Centre and circulated them to the wider Chaplaincy community but this ran into problems with the University over copyright after six issues. Nevertheless, it was by providing this framework of the body metaphor and a means for the narrative community to express its stories that I hoped many further conversations would be facilitated including the one between the Chaplaincy Centre and Christ Church.





## Section 3

### 'Apart or A Part?' Conversations about Christ Church

*KING: ...but when people in Parliament oppose, go against my wishes, I still find it very vexing. Try as I can, it seems to me disloyalty.*

*PITT: Your majesty should not take it so personally.*

*KING: Not take it personally? But I'm King. This is my government. How else am I supposed to take it but personally?*

*PITT: The Whigs believe it is their duty to oppose you, sir.*

*KING: Duty? Duty? What sort of duty is that?*

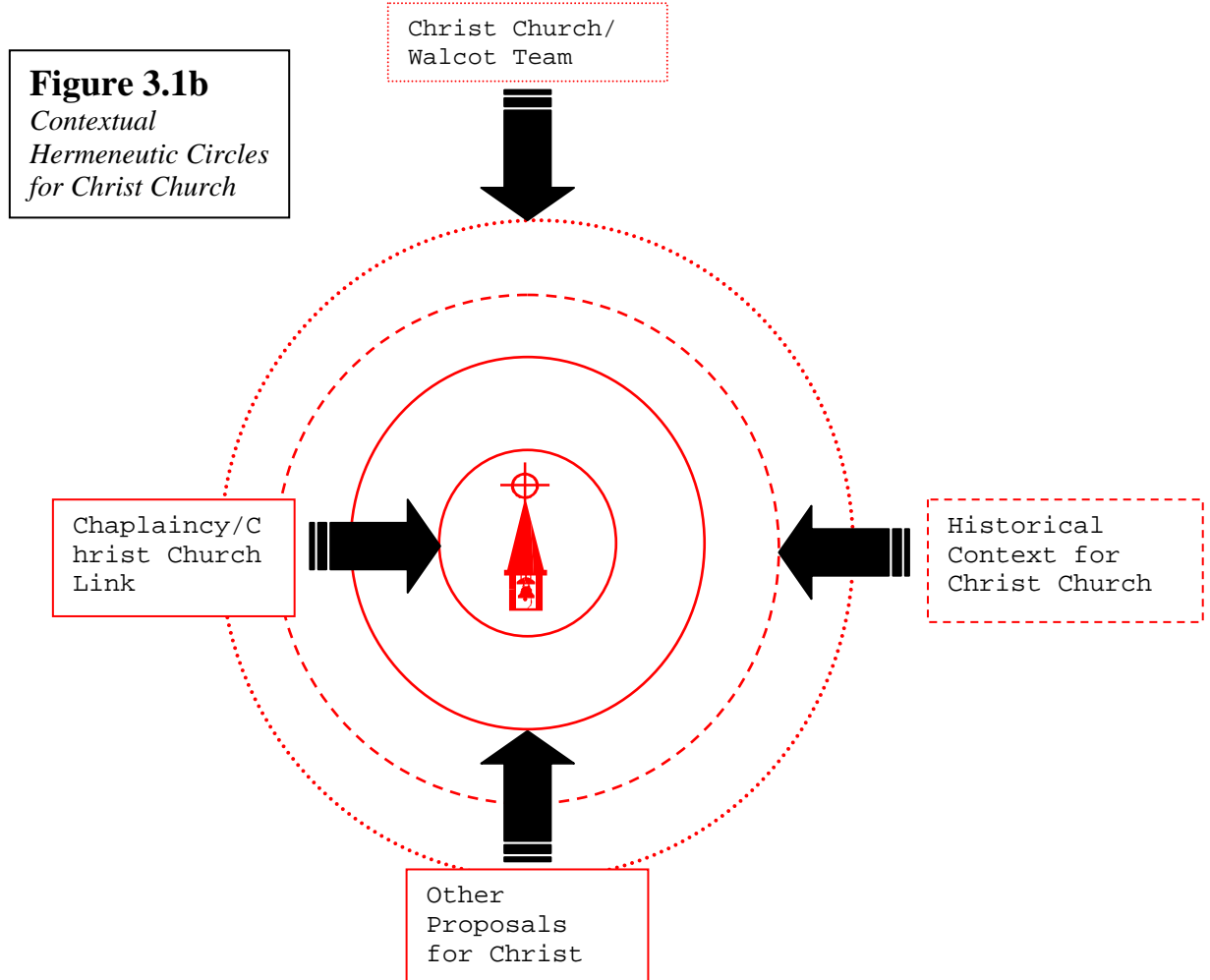
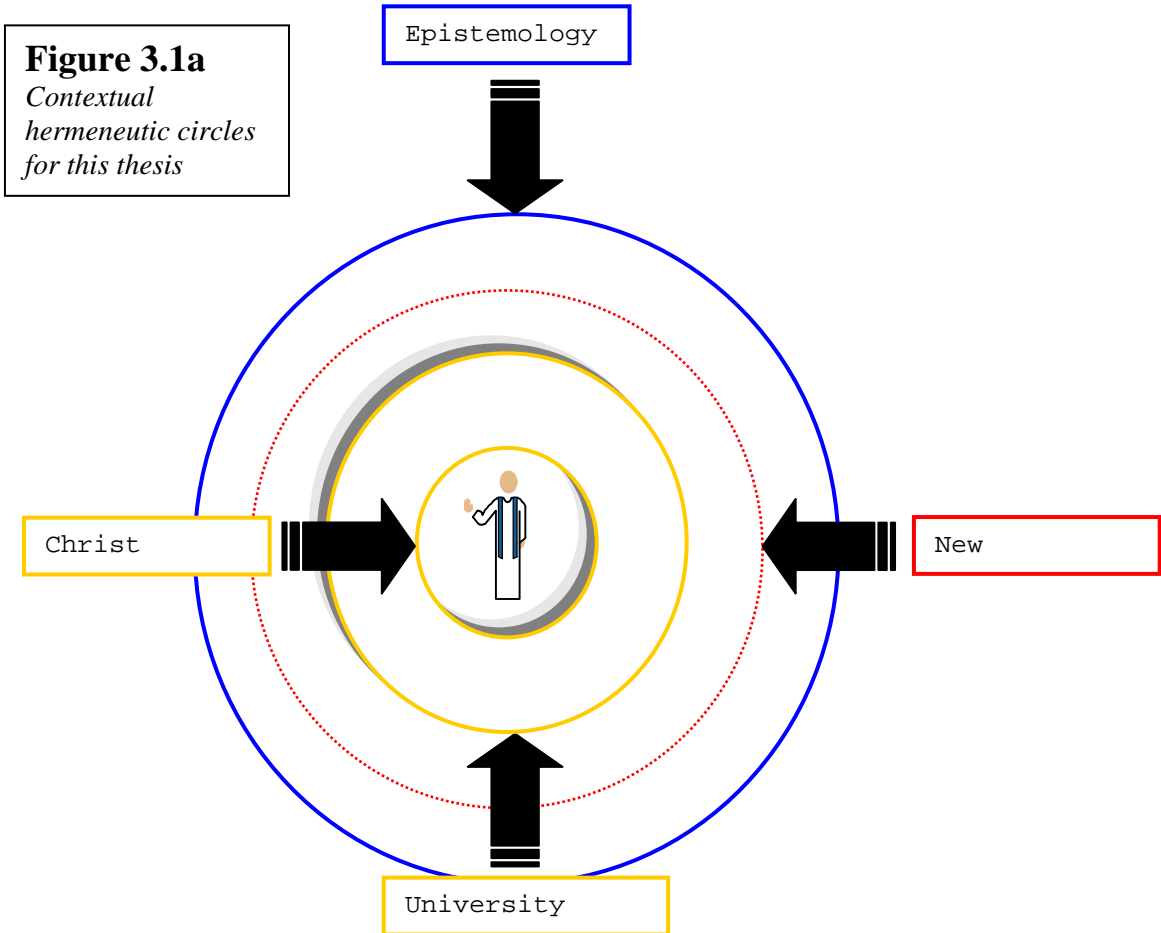
from **The Madness of George III** by Alan Bennett (Bennett 1992: 6)

### 3.1 Introduction

The exchange from Alan Bennett's play *The Madness of George III*, which heads this section, is between an 18th century monarch and his Prime Minister. For me it captures an essential element of the hermeneutic of self and organizational hermeneutic, which is being explored in this study – the inescapable process of understanding 'self' and 'selves' in terms of 'other'. This dialectic will be an important part of understanding events at Christ Church. It might be helpful to review the contextual hermeneutic circles which this study is exploring in the process of answering the research question which Wesley Carr has framed: 'What is happening to me and why?' (Carr 1985: 33) **Figure 3.1a** restates the context for my thesis, which initially began with the research inquiry 'What is happening to Christ Church and why?' It was only as the project grew that the wider hermeneutical framework 'self' as researcher, Anglican priest and University Chaplain developed.

Thus, the focus for this section is different from the others. The matters that I shall address here are not related, in the first instance, to my role – although it will be apparent from previous sections that this forms part of the context for my interest. I will be examining the position of Christ Church as an organizational anomaly within the Church of England. The significance of this study is that it is from examining such organizational irregularities ('other'), the organization is able to learn about itself ('self'). To this end I shall explore contextual hermeneutic circles for Christ Church as set out in **Figure 3.1b**. Not long after the Anglican link between the Chaplaincy Centre and Christ Church began the Diocese of Bath & Wells proposed a team scheme for the Parish of Walcot of which Christ Church would be a part.

That team scheme proposal provided the initial context for this research and provides the starting point for this sensemaking narrative of Christ Church. In the process of my research project I began to examine the historical background to Christ Church's unusual position within the Church of England. There was a strong feeling amongst some members of the congregation that if Christ Church had its own parish, then all the organizational difficulties would be resolved. There was also some rather vague, oral tradition that on one or two occasions such an eventuality had almost come about.



Others in the congregation believed that a parish would be no long-term answer to Christ Church's needs and that the church needed to continue their exploration of alternative solutions (3.3). One avenue I explored in order to shed some light on the parish/non-parish debate, which was occupying a great deal of the church's time and energy, was that of the historical background to the current situation. My historical investigations revealed a surprisingly different picture to the one I had expected and it is set out in 3.4. The recovery of Christ Church's 'lost story' also led me to reframe my understanding of the church's ministry and to a new perception of the Anglican link with the Chaplaincy (3.5).

However, before I discuss these four contextual hermeneutic circles for Christ Church it is important to locate them within the wider context of this study (**Figure 3.1a**). So I will preface this section with some brief comments about how this narrative relates to what has gone before, particularly with reference to the Chaplaincy. To refer back to Thiselton's analogy of the GP's consulting room, this section continues to examine the experiential story rather than the 'text book' narrative although, once again, the historical context is of great significance. The Anglican link between the Chaplaincy Centre at the University of Bath and Christ Church, Bath began with the start of the new academic year in October 1990. At that time the Revd Marcus Braybrooke was the Officiating Minister and the Revd Professor Cliff Burrows was his curate. However, just over a year later in December 1991 they had both resigned in circumstances that were confused, bloody and deeply painful for all involved. The focus for all the unrest which affected Christ Church during this period was a proposal by the Diocese of Bath & Wells to establish a team ministry for the benefice of Walcot which would include Christ Church as part parochial system for the first time. My attention as University Chaplain was, in the first instance, on the situation at the Chaplaincy and the 'link' events at Christ Church, but it was impossible not to become drawn into the fierce debate about the team scheme. This section will look at how the Anglican link between the Chaplaincy and Christ Church was developing before attempting to recount some of the events which lead up to and followed the team scheme proposals. The scheme itself was withdrawn in September 1992 and the final part will comment on that 'post-scheme' period.

The link with Christ Church took on a similar shape to those links that the Chaplaincy had with the Free Churches. In that respect, those students who had an existing denominational commitment were encouraged to maintain their affiliation. To that end I provided transport to Christ Church for the morning service of Holy Communion at 10.00am and to a new service in the evening at 6.30pm which drew on contemporary worship styles from such places as the Iona community, Taizé, the St Hilda community and others, together with the quasi-official forms of new liturgy being produced by the Church of England. In my presentation to new students I would, in line with the brief that the Chaplaincy Centre was to be there for those of all faiths and of none, present the range of options available in Bath through the Chaplaincy, the Christian Union and other faith traditions.

If that range of choice for religious practice was considerable, even in a relatively small city like Bath, the contrast now offered at Christ Church was also striking. On the one hand, the 10.00am Holy Communion was a straightforward Rite A service from the 1980 Alternative Service Book with a robed choir, chanted psalms and traditional hymns. On the other hand, the evening service rarely took the same format; it often included drama; the music was provided by a student music group and was anything but traditional. Over time a programme of guest speakers was developed which tackled such topics as Science and Religion, Inter-faith Dialogue, Religion and Creation, Inter-faith Perspectives on Jesus, Meeting Points With Faith and included addresses by from different Christian perspectives and faith traditions, including some who were well-known and controversial – such as George Austin, Eileen Barker, Colin Buchanan, Wesley Carr, Kenneth Cragg, Dan Cohn-Sherbok, Timothy Dudley-Smith, Don Foster MP, Anthony Freeman, John Hick, Tony Higton, Clifford Longley, Michael Marshall, Ysenda Maxtone-Graham, Emma Nicholson MP, Chris Patten MP, Arthur Peacocke, Adrian Plass, Donald Reeves, Elizabeth Stuart, John V. Taylor, Peter Vardy, Rowan Williams, Maurice Wiles. These and other speakers were designed, in part, to reflect and explore the diversity of the Christian body and to engage with the 'other' i.e. different faith traditions. Again, over a period of time, each service built up a student following and some students would come to both. What I found surprising, given my view on how a service of Holy Communion can exclude people because each worshipper needs to be confirmed to participate fully and non-eucharistic worship is more inclusive in this respect

(Roberts 1989), was that the 10.00am built up a larger and more loyal student following. Although students did come to the evening service, that tended to attract people from further afield who were interested in a specific topic or speaker. If that aspect was unexpected, one of the ways in which the link did work was to provide a home base for those students who were returning from placement. The University of Bath offers many four year courses which involve one placement for a year or two placements of six months. This meant in extreme cases, it was possible for students who became friends in their first year to hardly see each other again if their courses 'clashed'. The relatively stable population at Christ Church provided a base and a group of familiar faces for people to return to after a period away. We also developed another means of keeping track and in touch with the University's fluid community through a weekly chaplaincy newsletter. A named copy was delivered each week to those students who requested it and this usually involved a print run of nearly 600. The Chaplaincy News would also include the range of services offered by the all Chaplaincy's link churches (2.6). However, against the background of the vibrant life of the Chaplaincy it is no exaggeration to say that a civil war was under way at Christ Church over the proposals by the Diocese of Bath & Wells to place them in a team ministry with Walcot parish.

### 3.2 Of Schemes and Schism

This is not an easy topic to write about even given the passage of time and the fact that a number of participants have moved on or, in some cases, died. The proposal of the team scheme presaged a very angry and painful episode in Christ Church's history and there were a number of conflicting views, which could not be reconciled. At the time, blame for this state of affairs was attributed to just about everybody who was involved – to the diocese in general, to specific diocesan officials, to Walcot parish, particular people in the parish, as well as to Christ Church and individual people at Christ Church. It is impossible to understate the animosity and passion that this proposal aroused inside and outside the Christ Church congregation. In what follows I have tried to give a dispassionate account of these events because I feel that little good can be served by stirring up the sense of mistrust and hostility, which existed in the early 1990s. I also genuinely believe that much of the responsibility for that state of affairs does not lie with the protagonists of that time. I shall argue below (in 3.4)

that a good deal of what happened then was shaped by an historical context of which Christ Church and Walcot parish were only (at best) dimly aware. Although people knew that there was a history of suspicion between the two, the actual circumstances of those misgivings were lost in the mists of time and part of my attempt to reframe this dispute was to recover that missing story. Before describing that process of reframing, I shall briefly outline in **3.3** two other attempts to provide a solution to Christ Church's situation as a non-parochial proprietary chapel within the parochial system of the Church of England.

### 3.2.1 The Team Scheme Proposals

I have drawn on a number of sources for the account which follows. First, a number of archive collections – notably the Church of England Record Office (CERO); the Somerset Record Office at Taunton (SRO); Thrings and Long (solicitors for Christ Church); the files of the churchwardens at Christ Church and Basil Sheldon (secretary to the Christ Church Trustees in the post-war period, until 1994). In addition I have also been given access to the personal papers of: Preb Marcus Braybrooke (Officiating Minister at Christ Church 1984-1991); from Dr David Sims (member of the Church Council 1978-1994, Deanery Synod 1984-1993, Deanery Pastoral Committee 1987-1993) and Dr Douglas Peters (Lay Chairman of Bath Deanery Synod 1979-present) together with my own files as Chair of the Church Council 1991-present. These people also permitted me to interview them on the subject of the proposed team scheme. In addition, I taped interviews with the Revd Ronald Broackes (a former Officiating Minister at Christ Church), Yvonne Morris (Secretary to the Christ Church Trustees from 1994-96 and Headteacher at St Mark's School during the period discussed in 3.3.1), Stanley & Pat Burden (Stanley was churchwarden at Christ during this period described in 3.2), George & Joan Bunkin (George was a previous churchwarden), Mark & Margaret Heath (Margaret took over as churchwarden when Stanley resigned) and Georgina Bowman (a lawyer and member of the Christ Church choir). This was supplemented by recordings of important meetings such as those of the Standing Committee and the Church Council before and after the visit of the Bishop of Bath & Wells to both Walcot and Christ Church in June 1992. I also kept a diary of events and my personal comments during this period.

Given the complex history and the resolute theological differences between Christ Church and the Parish of Walcot, the idea of incorporating them into a team ministry might seem to be an impossible task from the outset. Yet when the proposal came to be voted on in the early 1990s there was a strong possibility that the Church Council at Christ Church could have approved it. The first reference I could find to the idea of a team scheme with Walcot was in a paper written by Marcus Braybrooke in preparation for a joint meeting between the Rector and Churchwardens of Walcot, the Vicar and Churchwardens of Christ Church, the Rural Dean (Preb Denys Goodman) and the Lay Chairman of Deanery Synod (Dr Douglas Peters) in September 1988. This paper also included the idea of linking Christ Church with a specialist ministry (see **3.3.1**).<sup>1</sup> The trajectory of the proposal (to appoint a team vicar within Walcot who would have special responsibility for Christ Church) from that meeting in 1988 to their formal discussion at a special meeting of the Church Council at Christ Church on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1991 is not an easy one to trace either through documentation or through interview. There was a great deal of pain caused to all involved and there was no one I spoke to who did not feel hurt in some way by the process. In addition, there seems to have been a serious absence of trust both externally towards the diocese and Walcot as well as inwardly towards others in the church. The reasons for that were complex, arising out of long standing frustration within Christ Church towards Walcot and the diocese over the matter of a separate parish not having been created for Christ Church (see **3.4**), the personalities of those involved and circumstances beyond anyone's control. Probably the crucial meeting in this process: the special meeting the Church Council at Christ Church on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1991 at

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<sup>1</sup> Marcus Braybrooke's paper made the following suggestions:

1. Continuing to rely on NSM or retired clergy.
2. Create a new full time stipendiary position: (a) through a separate parish or conventional district but that would break up the parish; (b) by appointing a curate to Walcot with responsibility for Christ Church but that might jeopardise Christ Church's distinctive ministry; (c) by appointing a team vicar which would maintain integrity of Walcot and distinctiveness of Christ Church.
3. If Christ Church is not a full time job could it be joined to: (a) a specialist ministry in Bath (eg community relations, link with schools, adult education); (b) specialist Diocesan responsibility (eg Archdeaconry warden of readers, Editor of Diocesan News); (c) share in Walcot ministry team (although it might create tension for one person to be at home in two distinctive traditions).
4. If funds were not available for a new full time post, should the Trustees be empowered to engage a minister (full or part time) on terms which they negotiate?



which council members David Sims (organist & choir master) and Stanley Burdon (churchwarden) set out the case for<sup>2</sup> and against<sup>3</sup> the proposed team scheme. The outcome was the following resolution was put forward and passed:

This Council does not believe that the proposed Team Ministry is the way forward for Christ Church.

That added fuel to the suspicion, confusion and hostility which existed amongst a number of church members which surfaced in a series of letters to the Diocese; to the Bishop-designate for Bath & Wells, the Rt Revd Jim Thompson; and to the press. There was also a series of meetings between members of the Church Council and the new Rector of Walcot which also seemed to break down in confusion and some recrimination. In the midst of this turmoil Marcus Braybrooke officially resigned as Officiating Minister at the end of October/beginning of November 1991, accepting a post at another non-parochial Anglican chapel in Bath. This provoked more feelings of hurt and uncertainty together with more letters as several members of Christ Church felt that Marcus had been forced out of his position in the church by the Diocese. Meanwhile on 1st December 1991 there was an open meeting at Christ Church to explain to the whole congregation what had been happening, including the arguments for and against the scheme together with the reasons why the Church

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<sup>2</sup> David Sims outlined six reasons why he was against the scheme:

- 1) The scheme is backward looking and Christ Church looks more like the church of the future;
- 2) The scheme will not last with predicted clergy shortages;
- 3) Christ Church pays full quota but will only have a half time priest;
- 4) Teams do not work and many have been abandoned;
- 5) The distinctive contribution of Christ Church will be lost;
- 6) "If it ain't bust, don't mend it!"

<sup>3</sup> Stanley Burdon offered six reasons for accepting the scheme:

- 1) Christ Church was being offered a full time vicar and vicarage;
- 2) Recognition of its Churchwardens and Church Council;
- 3) A chance to participate fully in synodical government;
- 4) A solution to the difficulties in finding NSMs and/or retired clergy;
- 5) It was most unlikely that the proposal would mean a Walcot 'take-over';
- 6) This chance was unlikely to ever come again.

(from Appendix 3 of the Minutes of a Special Meeting of Christ Church Church Council, 3rd September 1991)

Council had rejected it. This was essentially a meeting for information and no vote was taken but it left many things unclear, not least the legal position surrounding Christ Church. As a result there was a further open meeting on 19th March 1992 with Martin Cavender, the Diocesan Registrar (who was about to leave and take up another job) and his successor, Tim Berry.

The minutes of the meeting, taken by Jo John the secretary to the Church Council, record that there were six main areas of discussion:

- 1) the different Anglican traditions represented by Christ Church and Walcot and Christ Church's desire to maintain theirs;
- 2) the importance of the People's Ministry and the growth that had occurred at Christ Church under this approach to ministry;
- 3) the apparent 'junior status' of the Team Vicar of Christ Church would have in the proposed scheme;
- 4) do parishes really work in cities and does Christ Church want to be a parish church?
- 5) the feeling that the diocese had not consulted fully over the scheme;
- 6) the advantages of the Team Scheme, especially bringing Christ Church into the Anglican 'system'.<sup>4</sup>

Another issue to be clarified at the meeting was what *type* of church Christ Church was. The Diocesan Registrar, Martin Cavender, stated that in his opinion Christ Church was a Proprietary Chapel and not a Chapel-of-ease. This had been a matter of some debate amongst the trustees of Christ Church who owned the building and were

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<sup>4</sup> Dr Douglas Peters was present on behalf of the Rural Dean and confirms some of these points: "64 members of the congregation were present at this meeting where the proposed Scheme for a Team Ministry was dealt with in open discussion. There were those (Mr Burdon etc) who were quite certain that a Team Ministry 'would ensure the future of the church'. There were others (Mr Sheldon, Dr Sims, etc) adamantly against, saying that with a Team Ministry they would lose their independence, that they would become a junior party to Walcot, that if there were cut-backs in clergy numbers in the future that perhaps the Team Vicar would have to be fore-gone, leaving Christ Church under Walcot inside a legal structure they could not escape from. Sims said a Team Ministry had to be taken on trust and he did not feel prepared to do this. Several spoke of the strength of their laity ('our ministry to our own people is what we are looking at – Silverman, although he 'was not unequivocally against' the Scheme)." (A letter from Douglas Peters to Alastair Wallace dated 20th March 1992)

ultimately responsible for all that went on there. I shall elaborate on the significance of this matter below (3.2.1). The meeting of the Church Council voted against the Team Scheme by 48 to 7 with 9 abstentions. Meanwhile the team scheme had been sent on to Church Commissioners, as was required by the process, so they could make any comments they wished to. Their response arrived in April summarising the cases for and against the Team Scheme and posing 11 questions which they felt that the Bishop should answer before the submission went any further forward.<sup>5</sup>

On 27th April 1992 the Bishop of Bath & Wells called a meeting at which he, the Archdeacon of Bath, the Rural Dean of Bath, Graham Dodds, Philip Noakes and myself discussed the Commissioners' response. Three ideas were put forward: (i) Establishing a Team for Walcot and leaving Christ Church as it was; (ii) No action on the Team but having a two year period of independent, constructive co-existence; (iii) proceed with Scheme as published. (i) was favoured as the way forward. On 25th June 1992 the Bishop held meetings at Walcot and Christ Church and prior to that he had received briefing papers from Christ Church and a letter from Professor Bernard Silverman urging formalisation of the Chaplaincy Link. At the open meeting at Christ Church Bishop Jim came with three proposals: (i) To create a Team Ministry at Walcot without Christ Church; (ii) To leave Christ Church as it is but explore the Link with the Chaplaincy; (iii) To reform the trust to enable the appointment of a priest-in-charge by the Rector of Walcot under licence of the Bishop.

In July 1992 the Bishop of Bath & Wells published his conclusions after his consultations with Walcot and Christ Church which stated that:

- 1) Both have an enthusiastic commitment to their vision of the Gospel.
- 2) Team ministry for Walcot remains long term aim.
- 3) Christ Church will remain subject to Trust.
- 4) Christ Church want to remain part of the Diocese and must seek to do so.
- 5) Negotiations should be opened between University, Christ Church, Rural Dean and Lay Chairman about the link.

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<sup>5</sup> The full text of the Church Commissioner's letter and their 11 questions is set out in Appendix 6.

- 6) Trust should continue to review its objectives in the light of Charity Commissioners requirements.
- 7) Christ expects us all to love one another and it is essential that this must be the way in which we face up to the future in sharing mission.

The scheme was finally withdrawn by the Diocese and confirmation of this came in a letter to all interested parties from the Church Commissioners:

I am now in a position to inform you that, acting in accordance with the Bath and Wells Diocesan Pastoral Committee, the Bishop of Bath and Wells has asked the Commissioners to withdraw the draft Scheme ... It is necessary for me to explain that the withdrawal is without prejudice to the power of the Diocesan Pastoral Committee and the Bishop, under the provisions of the Pastoral Measure, to formulate fresh proposals for the Commissioners leading to the preparation of a new draft Scheme, if this is considered appropriate, at a future date. (A letter from Miss R S Sousa dated 22 September 1992)

Written up in this neutral way, these events may seem relatively bland and rather uncontroversial. They were not. It is striking to compare Ruth Sousa's measured and official letter with some other correspondence of that period. The first is part of a letter of protest and accusation to the diocesan bishop from two leading members of the Christ Church congregation regarding an occurrence which happened following the departure of the Revd Marcus Braybrooke from the church. In this correspondence the couple are saying they are:

still very concerned that our complaint to you has not been resolved. The crux of our complaint is that an ordained minister accused both of us of getting rid of another ordained minister, and that as you know is completely untrue. Everything else within Christ Church can be resolved in time with prayer and understanding. In all the dioceses we have worked in during our lives we have never been treated in such a manner by an ordained minister.

The frustration of that correspondence is typical of that time and it coloured much of the church's life. The animosity of the circumstances is picked up and reflected back by the bishop in his reply but, significantly, he makes a personal suggestion, which I think had wider implications:

I am not willing to be involved in correspondence of this sort. I am afraid it is not good use of my time and it really is, in the end down to Christian people to exercise forgiveness and penitence on their own behalf ... Perhaps this letter will make you angry. I am sorry if it does, but I feel you are so caught up with this issue that something has got to break through it and enable you to be free from the past.

In order to "break free from the past" it is necessary to know about it and understand it. Some prophets of late-modernism such as Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck have argued contemporary culture is characterised by a lack of historical perspective and that is no bad thing. Whereas other prophets of what might be called 'eschatological' modernism, such as Alasdair MacIntyre (MacIntyre 1981, 1994) and Stjepan Meštrović (Meštrović 1998) have argued that a lack of historical sensibility has dire

consequences for society. In a similar fashion I have argued that a lack of historical perspective is a crucial flaw in Positivism (1.2.5). Furthermore, I believe that a historical standpoint is fundamental to understanding chaplaincy ministry in higher education, so I shall argue a similar position is crucial for comprehending the bigger picture at Christ Church and (to use the words of the bishop) 'freeing' it from its past. I will discuss this matter in detail in 3.4, where I outline a renewed understanding of Christ Church's past, but interpreting one specific aspect of the past was a highly contentious issue during the discussions about the team scheme. That issue was the unresolved question about the patronage of Christ Church.

### 3.2.1 The Dispute Over 'Patronage'

Perhaps the most contentious issue from Christ Church's past was the question of who was their patron. In the Church of England the patron of a parish has the power to 'present' someone for the job of vicar or rector. To say that opinions were divided on

the matter would be an understatement. On the one hand there were some in the Diocese, on the Christ Church trustees and on church council of Christ Church who were sure that patronage rested with the Rector of Walcot. On the other hand, there were those within the same three groups who held equally strongly that it did not. Yet, even under each of those polarised points of view there was a great diversity of opinion. For example, in many of his letters the Archdeacon of Bath makes it clear that he believes the Rector has the authority to appoint the Officiating Minister at Christ Church. Whereas his fellow trustee, Basil Sheldon, in conversations with me for this research while agreeing that this was the case argued that in 'custom and practice' the appointment was left to the diocese. On the other side of the argument, amongst those who believed that the Rector of Walcot had no power whatsoever in this matter some argued that since Christ Church was not a parish church there was no patron at all, while others contended that legally the 'patron' would be the trustees.

On the face of it, this unresolved legal battle may seem relatively minor but it had a profound impact on life at Christ Church. In the Church of England any contentious issue at a local level, over which some advice is needed, is usually referred to the archdeacon. There were several such matters at this time but, in this instance, the archdeacon concerned believed implacably that such matters should be referred to him through the Rector of Walcot since he was the figure of authority in the parish and the patron of Christ Church. A further distinction was also significant at this junction – was Christ Church a "Chapel of Ease" or a "Proprietary Chapel". If the former was the case then Christ Church would be seen as a parochial place of worship to help those who were unable to go to the parish church. If it was the latter, then it would be recognized as a church which was largely independent of the parish. Once again the Venerable John Burgess, the Archdeacon of Bath, was clear in his mind that Christ Church was a Chapel of Ease, while the church itself maintained that it was a Proprietary Chapel. Again this legal distinction had important implications for the relationship between Walcot parish and Christ Church who had authority to appoint the Officiating Minister. The disagreement over what type of church Christ Church was, did not resolve itself until an open meeting on 19th March 1992 attended by the Diocesan Registrar, Martin Cavender, who stated firmly that in his opinion Christ Church was clearly a Proprietary Chapel. However, this ruling did not clear up the question of patronage, which continued to cause difficulties.

In an effort to shed some light on the matter the Church Council of Christ Church asked Georgina Bowman, a regular worshipper and trained lawyer, to examine the matter ahead of a meeting with the Bishop and other interested parties in June 1993, this meeting at Wells. She prepared a paper for the Council<sup>6</sup> noting that "the 1801 Trust Deed is silent as to the patronage of Christ Church" and suggesting four legal possibilities:

- (a) Patronage was reserved by the original owner of the land (Lord Rivers);
- (b) The original Feoffees were appointed as patrons;
- (c) Patronage rests with the Trustees;
- (d) Patronage rests with the diocese

Her private opinion, which was not expressed in the report, was that (c) was the most likely and this was later confirmed by the judgement of the Diocesan Chancellor in 1995<sup>7</sup> which stated that:

There is no evidence that the right to choose a minister was ever conferred upon the Rector ... Since the trustees had to set the minister's remuneration, prescribe his duties, and specify whether his appointment was for a fixed period or terminable on notice, it is inconceivable that their functions did not extend to choosing him. (Opinion by Timothy Briden, Chancellor of Wells 31st May 1995 pp 4-5)

This is a key point in this account of events at Christ Church. In a narrative organization like the Church of England, the story that is told about the past is authoritative for the present. In this case the story told by the Archdeacon of Bath, the Venerable John Burgess, about Christ Church was that it was a Chapel of Ease and that the Rector of Walcot was its patron. This was contested by Christ Church and by others in the Diocese, such as the Diocesan registrar. Yet throughout the discussions about the team scheme the Archdeacon's perspective continued to shape events,

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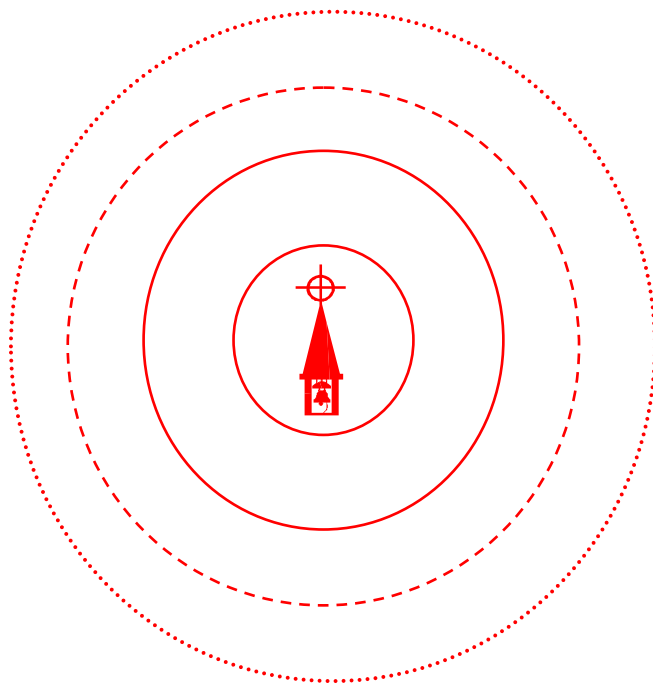
<sup>6</sup> This report is set out in Appendix 8

<sup>7</sup> For the full statement see Appendix 9.

although it was long thought to be suspect. It this experience of the contradictory views taken by the Archdeacon and Christ Church on its past which was the impetus for me to make my own check on the historical circumstances of Christ Church. The details of this are set out in **3.4**. Within a framework of sensemaking, this decision can be seen as an example of Emery Roe's (Roe 1994) approach to narrative policy analysis involving story, counterstory and metanarrative which I shall discuss in Section 5 (**5.3.3 (i)**).

The outcome of the failed team scheme proposals and the stalemate over who had authority to appoint a new Officiating Minister at Christ Church meant that I became the *de facto* Officiating Minister. In other words, I was having to maintain my role as researcher but was, at the same time, becoming more an ever more involved part of the organizational object of my study. As this process increased, it seemed to me as researcher that I needed to explore the wider contextual hermeneutic of this study and place this account within a broader narrative (**Figure 3.1a**). This was an important juncture in terms of the chronology of this research. It was when I became, in effect, the Officiating Minister that the focus of this thesis began to move from the contextual hermeneutics of Christ Church (**Figure 3.2a**) to the contextual hermeneutic of 'self' and Christ Church (**Figure 3.2b**) to the eventual focus of the contextual hermeneutics of 'self in Christ Church and in Chaplaincy' (**Figure 3.2c**). Therefore, the focus of this study changed from a sensemaking project in terms of Christ Church to a sensemaking project in terms of hermeneutics of self-in-context. An important part of that hermeneutic remains my understanding of Christ Church, which emerged in conversation with its context and its history – both its immediate past (**3.3**) and its longer term history (**3.4**). This process of establishing a sensemaking context was located in the Chaplaincy (Section 2), in my epistemological understanding (Section 1) but also in the historical narrative of Christ Church which lay in the proximate (**3.3**) and more distant past (**3.4**). It is to these contexts that I now turn my attention.



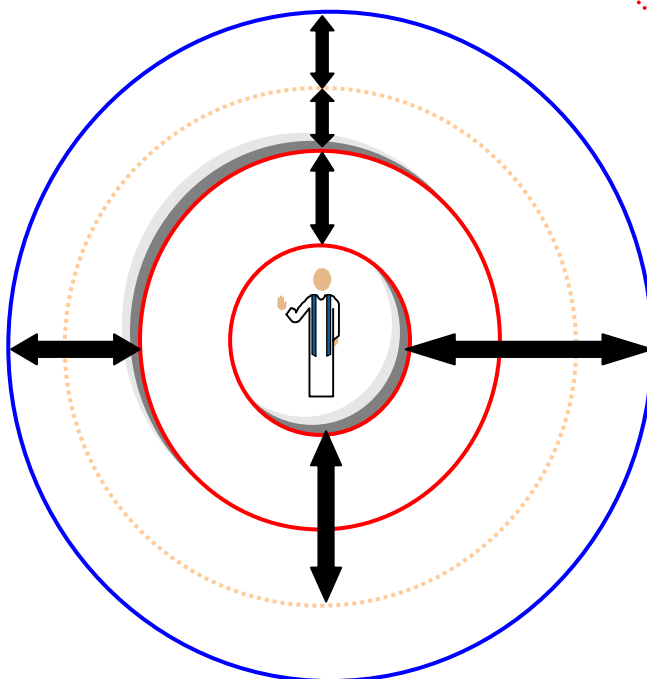
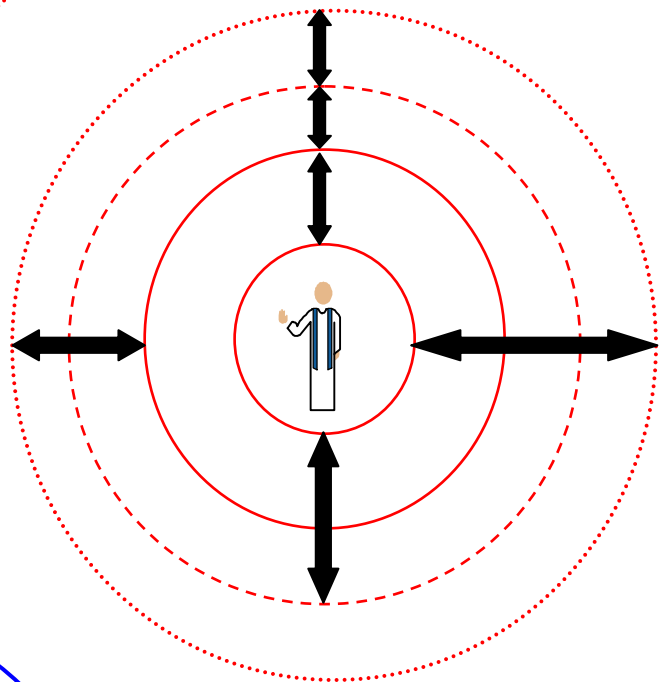


**Figure 3.2a**

*First focus for research with  
Christ Church at the centre of  
contextual hermeneutical circles*

**Figure 3.2b**

*Second focus for research with self  
at the centre of the contextual  
hermeneutic circles of Christ  
Church*



**Figure 3.2c**

*Third focus for research with 'self  
at Christ Church' at the centre of  
contextual hermeneutic circles of  
epistemology, New Testament and  
the Chaplaincy Centre*

### 3.3 Of Schools and Solutions

The proposal for the team scheme was not the first attempt at finding a new approach to Christ Church's ministry. In the late 1980s there had been an attempt to make a link with another educational establishment in Bath and, at the same time, the church had also developed its own distinctive style of ministry called the 'People's Ministry'. Both played significant roles in the team scheme discussions and it will be helpful to look back at them, before going even further back to examine how Christ Church arrived in its present non-parochial position.

#### 3.3.1 Christ Church & Education

In 1987 the Deanery of Bath began to explore the new idea of putting the ministry at Christ Church onto a sounder footing by linking it with a chaplaincy post at St Mark's, the local Anglican Secondary School. It seems likely that the founder of Christ Church, Charles Daubeny, would have approved of any link between Christ Church and a place of education. Indeed, in words typical of his time, he made an explicit connection between the two in his Foundation Sermon where he argued that it was:

the founders of schools and seminaries for the religious education of the poor that have been ranked among the greatest benefactors to mankind, considered as sowing the seeds of peace, order, and good government in the world. (Daubeny 1792)

He goes on to praise the work of the other eighteenth century church/educational voluntary movement – the Sunday Schools, for their initiatives with the young and the poor. However, in the same sermon he also looked ahead to what was going to happen when pupils and students left Sunday School and what education (if any) these people would receive. Although, Daubeny's perspective is clearly that of an 18th century Anglican cleric, it could be argued that his views represent an early concern for secondary, further and higher education and that any educational link would be carrying on an important aspect of the original vision of Christ Church. Certainly education was an important part of the agenda of the Hackney Phalanx (Wand 1961; Nockles 1994) and with the formation of the National Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church by the Phalanx in

1811, they had a powerful and effective voluntary organization (Chadwick 1971 [1966]) committed to that aim outlined by Daubeny in his Foundation Sermon. In 1934 the society changed its name to The National Society for the Promotion of Education in accordance with the principles of the Church of England which was more in keeping with developments in English/Welsh society and education. Furthermore, from very early on in its history the National Society had an interest in Higher Education – principally through the training of teachers in its own colleges. However, this plan of linking Christ Church to St Mark's floundered. In an interview in June 1995 with Yvonne Morris, the Head Teacher of St Mark's during this period, she stated the idea was blocked by a group of evangelical clergy at a meeting of Bath Deanery Synod where a "serious dichotomy of understanding of the role of a church school" revealed itself. According to the Head the crux of the problem was the issue of the overall philosophy of the school in which the teaching staff saw St Mark's as:

the school for the local community, taking all comers but with a Christian commitment to ... good, high quality religious education in the proper educational sense of the word, and a Christian attitude towards serving the school, the pupils and the community and so on. That was the philosophy which we tried very hard to develop and maintain at the school and it was a philosophy that was not acceptable to some of the clergy who had moved to Bath at that time because they felt that we should either just be taking the children of Christian families/Church of England families, or we should have adopted a hard RE line with non-Christian children. Which I, apart from not finding acceptable in educational terms, don't believe works either.

The link with St Mark's did not proceed due in great part to the objections of the vicar of St Saviour's – the parish in which the school stood. Thus, in terms of the pattern of relationships between Christ Church and Walcot parish, there is a striking parallel. First, the situation with Christ Church and Walcot was: an evangelical Anglican parish (Walcot) which contained a non-parochial, Anglican body (Christ Church) working with a different understanding of Christianity and different models of being a church organization. The situation with St Mark's School and St Saviour's Church was similar: an evangelical parish (St Saviour's) which contained non-parochial

Anglican body (St Mark's) working with a different understanding of Christianity and different models of being a church organization. In both cases the parishes and the non-parochial bodies ostensibly shared the same faith but different theological perspectives and therefore contrasting views about their roles. The second characteristic these situations shared was the failure of the proposal despite strong support from those with authority in the Church. The Chaplaincy at St Mark's had the backing of the Archdeacon and the Rural Dean in the same way that the suggestion of a separate parish for Christ Church appears to have had the consistent support of the Diocesan Bishop. Yet neither plan came to fruition. Why should this be? One possible answer is that these two instances illustrate the degree of power at the grassroots to thwart ideas from the top deemed unacceptable or unpopular. It may also indicate that the powers of those in the Diocesan hierarchy are not as great as they are sometimes perceived by those in local churches. Whatever the reasons, the result was that Christ Church's historical connections with the world of education were not re-established until the link with the University Chaplaincy emerged in 1990. They were then further strengthened with the appointment of a Christ Church governor for St Andrew's Primary School in 1995. St Andrew's Primary School had come about through a merger between Christ Church Infants School and St Andrew's Junior School. A previous Officiating Minister of Christ Church and former headteacher of St Stephen's Primary School, the Revd Ronald Broackes, told me in the course of an interview for this research that he had been promised a place on the governors in his capacity as the new Officiating Minister. This had never materialised and although he was not sure why, he attributed this outcome to some "funny capers" in the diocese. The appointment of a Christ Church governor was brought about by the Rector of Walcot, the Revd Graham Dodds and was a positive move in a sea of suspicion.

### 3.3.2 The People's Ministry

The poor relations with Walcot parish and the fact that Christ Church did not have a parish of their own were constant themes during the discussion of the team scheme. At one point in living memory Christ Church had a conventional district within Walcot parish, for which they had direct pastoral responsibility, but this was in the gift of the parish rector and with the coming of Philip Myatt as Rector it seems to have been withdrawn. In the light of this there was a strong sense, amongst those who

had lived through this process, that a separate parish had almost been within the grasp of Christ Church but had been snatched away at the last moment. Yet there was also a determination to frame an alternative vision for ministry at Christ Church and this emerged in the form of the "People's Ministry". This approach brought together developments in the wider Church (particularly since the Roman Catholics' Second Vatican Council) and the more localised changes (including the appointment of the Revd Marcus Braybrooke, a former Lay Training Adviser, to Christ Church as Officiating Minister). The widespread and positive impact of Vatican II has been widely noted and variously described as: making "large promises of renewal and reform" (Dulles 1974: 209 see also Dulles 1983); "the most important ecclesiastical event of this century, not just for Roman Catholics but for all Christians" (Hastings 1987 [1986]: 525); "a major theological paradigm shift" (Arbuckle 1993: 15); a "double paradigm shift" (Küng 1994: 195).<sup>8</sup> Of the many changes that the Council introduced, several affected styles of ministry and perceptions of the Church. Crucially, these included a more collaborative approach in terms of clergy working together and working with the laity. The place of lay people within the life and ministry of the Church was greatly enhanced. While all the hopes of Vatican II may not have been lived up to and the Roman Catholic Church has arguably seen a return to a more hierarchical approach centred on the current Pope, John Paul II, the ideals that Vatican II reflected have continued to resonate across the churches and, in the eyes of some, have brought about a fundamental change in understanding regarding ministry and mission for both Catholic and Protestant churches (Bosch 1991; Habgood 1993; Greenwood 1994; Evans 1994). One writer has recently commented:

it is a feature of our times that the 20-year-old revolution carried out by the Church of Rome following the Second Vatican Council has seriously disturbed the world Christian ecology. By using that image I mean to imply the interdependence of Christian denominations. Anglicans, for example, derive support and sustenance for what they are as Anglicans at

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<sup>8</sup> Although there are others who remained unconvinced, e.g. Flanagan 1996 and Berger 1990 [1966] who sees the increasingly important role of the laity as another indication of the privatisation and secularisation of Christianity.

least in part from what Roman Catholics are on the one hand, and from what Baptists are on the other. (Sykes 1995: 163)<sup>9</sup>

However, Stephen Sykes (Sykes 1995: 153-55) and Paul Avis (Avis 1989: 287-91) also draw attention to the fact that, within Anglicanism, the laity have always exercised authority under the auspices of the doctrine of universal priesthood allied to the three-fold ministry of deacons, priests and bishops.

As we have seen the notion of the "People's Ministry" became an important factor in Christ Church's discussions with the diocese and the Parish of Walcot over the proposed Team Scheme. Yet, it would only be fair to point out that there were some of those I interviewed from the congregation who felt that the "People's Ministry" failed to engage the whole church and merely left a few people to carry the whole burden. Certainly there seems to have been some connection between the pressures on Marcus Braybrooke in his role of Officiating Minister and the emergence through the Deanery Synod Pastoral Committee of a Team Scheme between Walcot Parish and Christ Church.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, Marcus himself noted some concerns in this respect in an article for the church magazine in October 1991.<sup>11</sup> Yet, despite these reservations, the principle that ministry at Christ Church was shared by all was clearly

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<sup>9</sup> Gerrit Broekstra has also drawn attention to the importance of this ecological metaphor in contemporary business organizations: "Responding to an increasingly 'critical', intrinsically out-of-control business ecosystem, agile corporations are learning to run faster in order to hold the same place. The machine paradigm of control is thus being replaced by the ecological paradigm of autonomy and networking in which the maintenance of a robust identity and organizational resilience amidst avalanches of discontinuous change becomes an overriding concern." (Broekstra 1998: 152)

<sup>10</sup> For example in August 1987 the Archdeacon of Bath wrote to Marcus: "... the pressures of [Christ Church] ... must be kept under control and that job could easily escalate. You will have to go on saying 'no', and we must force this issue out again into the public arena, as I hope to do so in September with the Deanery Synod Pastoral Committee. I shall urge upon them the necessity of dealing with this question very quickly indeed ..."

<sup>11</sup> Marcus Braybrooke, commenting about the Church Council's vote against the Team Scheme the previous month: "The concerns which gave rise to the scheme still exist – how to provide for the long term future for the ministry of Christ Church and how to relate the church to diocesan structures. Meanwhile it is important that we honour our commitment to a "People's Ministry" by action as well as words ... we must ensure that the work of running our Church is fairly divided and does not fall on just a few people."

a crucial aspect of the church's self-identity. This is illustrated by part of a mission statement (prepared by the church in advance of Bishop Jim Thompson's meeting with the congregation on 25<sup>th</sup> June 1992) which looks to the church's future:

**The future:** for many of us, further development of our People's Ministry is of prime importance ... In one sense we cannot expect that the congregation will remain stable and fixed but we can attempt to encourage all those who wish to participate in our worship and fellowship – a community in which freedom, equality and fraternity are important.

In addition, reflecting back on the place that the People's Ministry was perceived to have in the Team Scheme process a document drawn up in October of 1992 after the Scheme had been withdrawn (A Report of the Standing Committee to the Church Council on the Future of the Ministry at Christ Church – see Appendix 7) outlined its significance for the church:

A major point in our arguments against the proposed Walcot team ministry was that Christ Church had a growing people's ministry and that we wished to develop it.

Certainly in terms of exploring an alternative metaphor for Christ Church in the pluralist context of late 20<sup>th</sup> century Britain the concept of a "People's Ministry" opened up new and creative ideas. Furthermore, it provided an example of 'collaborative ministry' long before they became buzz-words of the 1990s. It was this open and co-operative approach to ministry which provided space for the Anglican link between the Chaplaincy and the church to flourish. One of the important outcomes of this relationship was the provision of funding by Christ Church towards a lay assistant who would work for both the church and the Chaplaincy. Yet in the aftermath of the withdrawal of the diocesan proposals there was still a division amongst the congregation. There were some who aspired to the traditional pattern of Anglican parish ministry but others found such an idea constraining. By contrast and in a mirror image of that situation, there were those who perceived these new approaches to ministry as exciting and innovative while others perceived them as merely a distraction from real church life. This tension between the two views about

the need for Christ Church to have a parish remained an important aspect of the life of the church after the withdrawal of the team scheme proposal by the diocese. In my dual roles of Officiating Minister and researcher I felt that if I was to move this never-ending debate forward it would be helpful to know the wider historical context for these discussions. It was against this background that I recovered, what I have termed, the 'lost' story of Christ Church's attempts to find a parish.

### 3.4 Of Parishes and Proposals – The 'Lost' Story

In recent years social and church historians have been rediscovering the importance of Charles Daubeny (1745-1827) and his impact upon both the Church of England and wider Georgian society. He has been identified as one of the key thinkers in the pre-Tractarian High Church movement within the Church of England known as the 'Hackney Phalanx' (Clark 1985; Varley 1992; Hylson-Smith 1993; Sachs 1993; Nockles 1994; Gibson 1994). The 'Phalanx' was a largely conservative, yet energetic, group of high church Anglicans who have been neglected until recently due to their portrayal by the Oxford Movement as spiritually barren and ecclesiastically hidebound. Consequently their impact upon English society and church life in the late 1700s and early 1800s had been caricatured as 'high and dry' (Wand 1961) while at the same time being played down. The restored picture of this group of dynamic high Anglicans owes a great deal to the Roman Catholic church historian Peter Nockles (Nockles 1994) and in this changed perspective Daubeny's two volume *Guide to the Church* (Daubeny 1830 [1798]) has been identified as particularly significant in setting the agenda for this group. Several historians note that he was renowned for opening the first 'free church' in England in 1798, subsequently called Christ Church, but none of them record that this church continues to exist and play a significant role in the ecclesiastical life of the city. Perhaps this is not surprising, given that the church itself has been unclear about its own story during the intervening years.

This part (3.4) sets out to recover that story, particularly Christ Church's fraught relations with its local Anglican parish of Walcot. In this section I shall set out the historical context for the tension between the two and then in Section 5 I shall elaborate how I see their story relates to my understanding of the Church as an embodied gestalt (5.3.3 (iv)). Before elaborating the 'lost' story of Christ Church, I



shall discuss the social context of Charles Daubeny's original plan for a free church, because it has a bearing on both the pluralism of contemporary society and on my discussion of the body as an organizational metaphor.

The setting for Daubeny's work and writing was the period following the French Revolution. The profound social significance of these events is well-established (Hobsbawm 1977; Brown 1991) but they also had a lasting effect on the churches in England (Vidler 1961; McLeod 1984, 1995a; Nicholls 1994 [1989], 1995; Nockles 1994) and across Europe (Küng 1995; McLeod 1995b). In his recent assessment of the impact of the French Revolution at this time, Hugh McLeod argues:

There is no doubt that in psychological terms the events of the 1790s in France cast a shadow over the religious history of the whole nineteenth century, even in those places where the church made good the material losses of these years. (McLeod 1995b: 6)<sup>12</sup>

Of course there are difficulties in interpreting a 'classic' event like the French Revolution (Tracy 1987; Jones 1995). Even more so when, as Nockles points out, historians have tended to present conservative reaction to events in France in predominantly secular political or military terms while ignoring the vigorous responses from the within Church, such as the renewed debate within high church Anglicanism of theories of government (Nockles 1994 – an exception being Clark 1985). This naturally included much discussion about church/state relations as well as Anglican church polity. However, in addition to the immense political challenge of the French Revolution the Church of England also faced the onslaught of a radical pluralism, the roots of which were laid by two hundred years earlier:

England's modern religious history begins in 1689 with the Act of Toleration. This indicated that the State had given up the attempt to force Anglicanism on the whole population through compulsory church

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<sup>12</sup> Cf E A Varley: "The French Revolution gave the imaginations of a whole generation a shock from which, for better or worse, they never recovered" (Varley 1992: 25) see also Roberts 1996c

attendance and the persecution of rival denominations. (McLeod 1995a: 4)<sup>13</sup>

The growth of dissenting congregations (or in Daubeny's terms 'schismatics') is a recurring theme in the *Guide to the Church* and is perceived as dangerous symptom of the wider revolutionary ferment. This forms the social background to the book's introduction in which Daubeny says his writing is:

An endeavour to rouse Christians from an apparent apathy due to a sense of tremendous danger attendant on that unsettlement of principles, and unsettlement of institutions, which characterize the present revolutionary age. (Daubeny 1830 [1798]: v)<sup>14</sup>

This also forms the backdrop to Daubeny's use of the body metaphor as an organizational image of unity. In his lengthy preface Daubeny sets out what he sees as the case for the Church of England to claim to represent the true Catholic and Apostolic Church – as against Roman Catholicism or other forms of church polity (e.g. Presbyterianism). He uses the body as a metaphor for unity here (p xli) but it is more fully worked out in his *Introductory Discourse*. There he argues that the Church was formed by Christ and that wilful separation from it is sinful; that Paul condemned those who caused divisions in the Church; it is not a matter of indifference "where the word of God is preached or by whom"; the founder of the Church was the "Prince of Peace" and true teaching about this institution should therefore be marked by an emphasis on love, harmony, a common mind and shared doctrine. All this, Daubeny believes, is summed up by Paul's image of the body:

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<sup>13</sup> Or in the wider context provided by Owen Chadwick: "From the moment European opinion had decided for toleration, it decided for an eventual free market in opinion." (Chadwick 1975: 21)

<sup>14</sup> Significantly, the French Revolution also forms an important part of the background to the building of Christ Church because in his sermon to launch the project Daubeny refers to: "Natural equality and equal liberty, those popular idols to which the reason of mankind is now clamorously called to bow down, are not only inconsistent with every civil establishment, but are moreover imaginary kinds of things which have no real existence." (Daubeny 1792: 17)

Unity, therefore, was designed to be an essential characteristic of the Church of Christ; the members of which were to be considered as constituting one body, animated by one spirit, imparted to them by their regular communication with one head, Jesus Christ. (Daubeny 1830 [1798]: 6)

However, it is significant that when Daubeny makes his appeal for funds to build his 'free church' he acknowledges a limited social diversity:

But, though God has been pleased to make a distinction between men and men considered as instruments for the promoting his honour and glory, and for carrying on his dispensations in the world; nevertheless, as candidates for Heaven, all men are placed in some respects upon the same level. "High and low, rich and poor, with one another" must all alike come to God through Christ, impressed with a due sense of their own nothingness (Daubeny 1792: 11-2)

It is my contention that Daubeny's project to build this free church (Christ Church) contradicts his understanding of the body metaphor, which is in terms of unity. It is clear from Daubeny's writing that his ecclesiology is consensual. By this I mean he used the body metaphor to stress the unity of the Church and the organizational importance of agreement and consensus in his robust restatement of Anglican Erastianism.<sup>15</sup> Yet when it came to his practical actions in bringing about organizational change, such as the building of Christ Church he embraced the other side of the embodied dialectic by using those voluntary principles he criticised in others. Thus, rather than embodying the dialectic in a creative and holistic way, he turned one side of the dialectic against the other by building a voluntarist church

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<sup>15</sup> "The term 'Erastianism' derived from the teaching of the sixteenth century church writer, Thomas Erastus, sometimes known as Thomas Luber. Erastianism implied that all religious truth was at the mercy of the civil power, and that political convenience was the sole test of belief." (Nockles 1994: 53) For an extensive discussion of the place of Erastianism within the Church of England see Avis 1989.

whose main stated aim is to oppose the notion of free choice in matters of faith.<sup>16</sup> I would argue that the key to understanding the tension between his thinking and his actions was his failure to engage with notion that the 'body of Christ' is a metaphor for diversity as well as unity. Such a position can be justified by the lost history of the 'free church' (Christ Church) he founded and the pattern of embodied dialectic which can be traced in its subsequent story.

### 3.4.1 The Early Period (1795-1822)

The foundation stone for Daubeney's 'free church' in Bath was laid in 1795 and the building opened for worship in 1798. It was built in the Parish of Walcot, which at the time comprised around 30,000 people and was one of the largest in England, covering a large geographic area that has since been split into four separate parishes. Christ Church's relationship with the parish seems to have been ambiguous from the outset and, although the historical documents from the time of the church's foundation are incomplete, they are sufficient to indicate that as the undertaking progressed it also changed and developed. Perhaps most significantly one of the earliest documents headed "No 1: Original Prospectus" focuses the project in the Parish of Walcot,<sup>17</sup> while a later, but still early, letter places the 'free church' in the wider context of Bath

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<sup>16</sup> Sachs notes the crucial role that governmental recognition of religious diversity played in Anglican self-understanding: "This change required the Church to reconsider its identity as the religious establishment. The Church lost its assurance of its proximity to government. Rather than favour one Church, government had to encompass diverse interests in order to be representative. Government could no longer vindicate itself upon its faithfulness to habitual form, or upon its divinely appointed character. Public approbation legitimated new forms of political authority." (Sachs 1993: 36) What Sachs does not say but was equally true was that 'public approbation' was also legitimating new forms of religious authority.

<sup>17</sup> "THE Want of general Accommodation for the Performance of the publick services of Religion, together with the evil consequences to be apprehended from the Bulk of the Community being deprived of the Labours of the Parochial Ministry, must to those who are well affected to our happy Establishment, be a matter of serious Consideration. That this is the case in the Parish of WALCOT, is notorious to all who are the least acquainted with it; and the continued Increase of its Buildings recommends the present subject to immediate attention. But it would be an affront, not less to the understanding than to the liberality of those to whom this is addressed, to say more upon the present occasion than what may be sufficient to inform them, for the more general accommodation of its Inhabitants, and of the POOR in particular; who are now alas! shut out from almost every place of public worship belonging to the Established Church."

as a whole.<sup>18</sup> No explicit reason is given for this development but there are hints that fund raising was not proceeding as quickly as had been hoped and it maybe that by involving the whole of Bath the instigators of the proposal were hoping to bring it to completion. Whether this is the case or not, the decision to proceed in this way left an important unresolved matter between the parish and Christ Church – to what extent was the church built for Walcot Parish and to what extent was it built to serve the whole city of Bath? This is a recurring dispute throughout the story. Certainly at this stage the project had the support of the then Rector of Walcot, John Sibley, and he is named as a trustee in an 1804 document announcing the completion of the project.

The next development appears to have been in 1813 when, according to the manuscripts and accounts in CERO, Sibley and Daubeney together made the first attempt to secure a separate parish for Christ Church. They applied to Queen Anne's Bounty (QAB), which had been established in 1704 to return some of the money confiscated by Henry VIII at the time of the Reformation, for funds to endow a new parish. It is not clear from the records why this request for an endowment was turned down. The trustees record some limited financial support from the fund<sup>19</sup> and in some correspondence from 1841 the then Bishop of Bath & Wells clearly regrets this failure.<sup>20</sup> However, the most likely explanation is provided by Robert E. Rodes who points out that grants from Queen Anne's Bounty could only be used for funding "by way of purchase and not by way of pension" (Rodes 1991: 161). In other words, the money could be used for capital expenditure but not running costs. This would be of no use to Christ Church since the land for the church was already procured and the

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<sup>18</sup> "THE Gentlemen engaged in carrying into effect the Plan for a FREE CHURCH, for the general use of the Inhabitants of Bath, but more particularly of the Poor, feel themselves happy in having it in their power to inform the Promoters of so Charitable an undertaking, that they have at length succeeded in securing a most eligible spot of ground, for the intended building."

<sup>19</sup> "... in consequence of a benefaction of £1,200, from the Revd Archdeacon Daubeney, together with an equal sum of £1,200, allotted to the said church, thro his application, by the Governors of Q A Bounty; the interest arising from which joint sums being appropriated to the sole use of the Senior Minister ..." (From the Trustees' Minute Book and dated June 5th 1813).

<sup>20</sup> "For some cause that plan failed which the Bishop regrets not only because of the difficulties which now remain for adjudication but also because an opportunity of effecting so very desirable an object for the then existing inhabitants of Bath was unhappily lost." (A letter from the Bishop of Bath & Wells dated July 24th 1841)

building erected. Yet, this original attempt to provide a space for Christ Church within the existing system is noteworthy for a number of reasons. First, it is striking that even though the idea of a separate parish for Christ Church originated with the Rector of Walcot, who was also one of the founders and clearly sympathetic to the church and its mission it did not come about. Later efforts had to contend with a widening ideological gulf between the parish and Christ Church as they divided into different theological 'parties' in the Church of England. Yet even when they shared a common ecclesiological background the wider Church was not able to integrate into the existing parish order this early institutional sign of the coming voluntary age for matters of faith and religion. Second, it can be seen from these early attempts to clarify Christ Church's position that the personal relationship between Sibley and Daubeney was crucial to the institutional relationship between Walcot and Christ Church but that is not a secure basis for an ongoing relationship between the churches – as will become clear. There does seem to have been some recognition among the trustees that some provision needed to be made for when these circumstances changed. The attempt to provide a parish for Christ Church was a move in this direction and, when that failed, the explicit reference in the Trustees' minutes to some form of succession of ministers appears to be a recognition of this.<sup>21</sup> Sibley died in 1815 and the first indication of future difficulties seems to have emerged in 1822. The minute book records a dispute between Archdeacon Moysey and Archdeacon Daubeney over which of them had responsibility for the collections taken at Christ Church. The Trustees agreed to refer the matter to the Archbishop of Canterbury. The matter was eventually resolved in favour of Daubeney but in his submission to the Archbishop he refers to a document produced by himself and Sibley designed to define the curious relationship between the Parish of Walcot and Christ Church:

a short pamphlet was distributed by the Rector and myself early in the Winter of 1793; in which it was expressly declared that the church in

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<sup>21</sup> “Whereas the Church called Christ's Church in the city of Bath, is about to be put on a plan different from that on which it has hitherto proceeded ... We do also think it reasonable, that the Junior Minister should be considered as entitled to succeed to the place of the Senior Minister on a vacancy, should the respectability of his character, talents and conduct in the church, be such as to leave no ground for reasonable objection to him.” Dated and signed: June 5th 1813 John Sibley, Rector; Charles Daubeney, Archdeacon of Sarum; Martin Stafford Smith, Rector of Fladbury, Worcestershire

question "though built upon a parochial plan" (by which it was meant all orders and degrees of persons) "shall nevertheless be totally free from all parochial control and direction whatsoever."

Thus, the early years of Christ Church see the church entering into an ambiguous relationship with one of the most important elements of Anglican self-identity – the parish. In other words Christ Church was founded on a contradiction since it was built on voluntary principles to support the contrary notion of an established church in a confessional state. There must either be good organizational reasons for this church to have survived so long or it must be a most amazing act of institutional good fortune.

#### 3.4.2 The Middle Period (1840-1901)

Charles Daubeney died in 1827 and it appears that the parish also went through an uncertain period. However in 1840, when the Revd G A Baker and Revd C M Mount were the Officiating Ministers at Christ Church, the Revd Widdrington bought the patronage of Walcot and appointed himself Rector. There is some fascinating documentary evidence at CERO from this time offering insights into the issues and the characters of those involved. A key document is a judgement given by the Bishop of Bath & Wells dated July 24th 1841 in which it appears that the new Rector of Walcot had given "Baker and Mount legal notice to surrender their cures" but they had taken legal advice and contended that the Rector was acting beyond his powers, since they were not his curates. As a result of this impasse Mr Widdrington appears to have written to the diocesan bishop setting out twelve disputed points on which he sought the Bishop's judgement. In response to this appeal the Bishop also took legal advice which too remains extant. The outcome was that in the Bishop's opinion most of the legal weight came down with Mount and Baker, against Widdrington and he reaffirmed Christ Church's independence from parochial responsibilities and from the direct authority of the Rector of the Parish. Further light on this period is shed by a memorandum written in the late 1890s by Widdrington's successor Canon Bernard at a time when a separate parish for Christ Church was again under discussion. This was a privately published booklet containing this description of his predecessor: the Revd Widdrington was:

... a man who had been an officer in the army, vigorous, active and full of schemes. He complained that Christ Church drew off the interest and resources of many leading parishioners without affording any help in the pastoral work of the parish ... (Bernard c1898)

Despite the rejection of his legal submission to the Bishop, Widdrington still seems to have influenced events at Christ Church and a number of important developments took place during this time which are significant. First, according to a memorandum in the CERO stating the case for a separate parish for Christ Church in November 1900, the Parish of Walcot was split into three in 1840 making the parishes of: Trinity, St Saviour's and St Swithin (Walcot). In addition Bernard states that the Bishop of Bath & Wells also appears to have floated the proposal of a separate parish for Christ Church at this time, but the Bishop:

could not see his way to it without the consent of Patron and Rector. The idea never took shape and was dropped at once (Bernard c1898).

Secondly, a vacancy for a minister occurred in 1842 and Widdrington nominated his curate, Mr Wood. This seems to have been accepted by all parties and Bernard is full of praise for this person's efforts.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, perhaps the most significant change happened when Widdrington left since, according to Bernard, the patronage of the Parish of Walcot was transferred again eventually being acquired by the evangelical patronage trust The Simeon Trustees.<sup>23</sup> The transfer of the patronage to an evangelical trust fund had the effect of institutionalising the growing ideological

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<sup>22</sup> Bernard believed that it is to his: "wise administration the subsequent popularity and prosperity of the church [Christ Church] are mainly due." (Bernard c1898)

<sup>23</sup> "The Advowson, after some changes, was in 1860 or soon after, bought by Rev Alfred Peache, for £7,000, and transferred by him to the present patrons, the Simeon Trustees. I was appointed by them in 1863, and held the Rectory for 23 years 4 months, in which time the delineation and separation of the Parish of St Stephen's, Lansdown, was effected; and the West end church (St Andrew's) was built at a cost of £26,000 nearly all raised by the Parish; as also East Walcot and Harley St schools at its Eastern and Western extremities." (Bernard c1898)



difference between Christ Church and the Parish.<sup>24</sup> Interestingly Bernard, writing out of an evangelical background, can affirm the diversity of the Church in a way that Daubeney never could and he speaks very positively of the attempt by another Anglican tradition to provide for the poor of the parish.<sup>25</sup> Yet, despite this recognition of the positive contribution by a different tradition Bernard was firmly against any further division of the Parish of Walcot and the establishment of a separate parish for Christ Church. In the conclusion to his memorandum he argues:

That the church, having in its present character proved its fitness and value for public requirements, ought to remain on the unappropriated and unattached plan on which it was founded. (Bernard c1898)

Bernard's own records suggest that two significant changes took place during his time as Rector of Walcot. First in his generally circulated memorandum he claims to have put an end to the "dual system" of having two Officiating Ministers and had nominated the present minister at the time of his writing (the Revd B. Norton Thompson) – although he had mixed views about his decision.<sup>26</sup> Second, he encouraged the foundation of a new church in the western end of the parish not far from Christ Church. As a result an appeal was launched to build St Andrew's Church which was eventually consecrated in 1873. The St Andrew's project is strikingly similar to Christ Church in that it was a voluntary appeal which Bernard addressed to "the Parish, the city, and the public at large". Perhaps significantly, the year that the

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<sup>24</sup> As Bernard acknowledges that Christ Church was always of a different tradition to himself: "The chief promoters were of the 'orthodox school' (as it was then called) as were also the Ministers and the leading seat-holders; and this gave the tone and tradition to [the church]." (Bernard c1898)

<sup>25</sup> "One effort of zeal and charity, at a time when such efforts were scarcely beginning, resulted in the building and consecration of Christ Church, which stands on the eastern verge of the District, but was not intended to be, and can never be its proper Church, being built under a special trust, and for a special object, and the whole of its area appropriated to the general use of the Poor of Bath." (Bernard 1868)

<sup>26</sup> "The appointment proved acceptable to the congregation and successful in the interests of the Church; but less happy for the Parish and myself. Speedily the old relations with Walcot and the Rector ceased, by policy of isolation and severance; and there was soon an active movement to change the status of the Church by procuring the separation of an Ecclesiastical Parish attached to it." (Bernard c 1898)

Revd B. Norton Thompson was appointed as Officiating Minister was also the year that a further parish was divided off from St Swithin's (1881 – St Stephen's Lansdown). It was under Norton Thompson's leadership that a formal application was made in 1887 to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for Christ Church to have a separate parish. This was opposed by Walcot and the eventual outcome was that the scheme was dropped but that Christ Church could take on certain parochial functions (eg weddings). However, the Incumbent and the church continued to press for a separate parish and in 1898 the Bishop instructed the Chancellor of the Diocese to chair an "Inquiry into the Application for the formation of an Ecclesiastical Parish for Christ Church". There were three open meetings during October 1898 and full typescripts of all the evidence taken are available at CERO. The outcome of the report was that the inquiry recommended:

the formation of a separate Ecclesiastical District having the church of Christ Church for its Parish Church. (A copy of the Inquiry's Report dated 29th October 1898 and forwarded to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in June 1900 by the Bishop of Bath & Wells).

The Bishop also makes it clear in a covering letter that he feels it would be difficult to ask any currently serving Rector of Walcot to accede to this plan and that this proposal would have to wait until there was an interregnum. In fact, there was not a long delay since the Preb. Lunt, the Rector of Walcot died two years afterwards and then in May 1900 the Bishop wrote to both the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and the new Incumbent saying that he accepted the recommendation of the 1898 Commission and proposing that "a District be assigned to Christ Church". In a second letter dated 30th June 1900 the Bishop wrote, in the style of the time:

... while the services at the churches in Walcot are such of which the Simeon Trustees would be expected to cordially approve, the services at Christ Church are of a slightly more advanced character and are very bright and popular, and the church is always crowded and that with people of all classes of society and the congregation comes from all over Bath.

In addition to commending the Chancellor's report and proposal for a Christ Church parish he also asked the Ecclesiastical Commissioners give a judgement about how to change the patronage of the church. A request which appears to have stopped the idea in its tracks when the Commissioners wrote back:

I am directed to point out that it does not come within the province of the Commissioners to determine the legal questions connected with the right to nominate a minister for Christ Church Walcot and until an arrangement respecting the patronage of that church acceptable to the Bishop of Bath and Wells and the Patrons and the Rector of Walcot has been arrived at, the Commissioners do not think it advisable to take any steps for assigning a Statutory District to the church. (Letter to representatives of Christ Church from the Ecclesiastical Commission, 11th December 1900).

Christ Church were in favour of a change of patronage and wrote to the Bishop of Bath & Wells asking if he would approach the Rector of Walcot requesting him to give up the patronage of the church. However the Bishop replied that he was in no position to accede to such a request<sup>27</sup> and there is no evidence that the second proposal for a parish for Christ Church progressed any further.

### 3.4.3 The Later Period (1942-1955)

It would appear that Christ Church worked, over a period of time, to address the problem outlined by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1901. In a paper written in 1950 by E L Millen, the Incumbent of Christ Church at the time of the next attempt to form a separate parish, this request for a change of patronage has come about:

The Patronage of Christ Church has already passed into the hands of the Bishop of the Diocese with the approval of the Rector of Walcot. (E L Millen's paper on Christ Church Bath dated 11th July 1950.)<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> "It must be known to you that I have no power to require this to be done, and all that I could do would be to ask that it should be done, leaving it to the Rector of Walcot to refuse my request or to comply with it. I do not chose to put myself in a position so very inconvenient ... It must therefore be for you to approach him and not for me." (A letter from the Bishop of Bath & Wells, 1 June 1901)

<sup>28</sup> A legal agreement from 1947 between the Rector of Walcot and the Bishop of Bath & Wells states:

It seemed that slowly, over time, Christ Church was surmounting the new obstacles that each attempt at finding a parish threw up and it is hardly surprising that Millen's resumé of the case should end on positive note:

In view of all the above facts it is difficult to understand why the desire of Christ Church to achieve the status of a parish should any longer be frustrated. (Millen 1950)

An important development during the 1939-45 war was the bombing of St Andrew's, which had been built to serve the western end of Walcot Parish. Its destruction opened up a number of different possible solutions to the question of Christ Church. According to the Churchwarden's records at Christ Church, the Bath & Wells Diocesan Reorganization Committee met on 26th November 1942 and proposed to the Bishop that Christ Church should move to St Stephen's, Lansdown which would be renamed Christ Church and would take over the parochial duties there. The patronage of St Stephen's which was held by the Simeon Trustees (who were also the Patrons of Walcot) should be transferred to the Bishop or the Diocesan Patronage Board. In addition:

St Andrew's Church shall not be rebuilt, and that the Trustees of Christ Church shall transfer that Church to Walcot Parish to provide a Church for the west end of Walcot Parish. (A letter from the Revd I G Sanders, Secretary of the Diocesan Reorganization Committee, to Miss F Vibert, Secretary of Christ Church PCC, dated 3rd Dec 1942)

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"NOW THEREFORE the said William George Claris Colbourn [Rector of Walcot] HEREBY AGREES with the Bishop that the Bishop may from time to time appoint and license a Minister to serve the said Church [Christ Church] and Conventional District hereinbefore referred to and described in preaching the Word of God and in reading the Common Prayers and in performing all other Ecclesiastical Duties belonging to the Office of Minister with power for the persons resident in the said Conventional District to elect a Parochial Church Council and to collect and disburse the Offertories arising from said District".

This idea was strongly opposed by both St Stephen's and Christ Church and, like the others, fell by the wayside.

The next move appears to have been in 1949 when Christ Church made another appeal to the Church Commissioners to be made into a separate parish on the basis of the existing Conventional District which had been assigned to it. The records at CERO are not released until fifty years after the relevant date so the details have not yet been made available. However, notes from the churchwarden's files at Christ Church suggest that the issue of 'patronage' was no longer a problem and that both Walcot and Christ Church were prepared for that to be vested with the Bishop of Bath & Wells. As we have noted, this had been done in effect by the 1947 agreement drawn up between the Revd William Colbourn and the Bishop of Bath & Wells. The difficulties were that the District only had a population of 1,500, which was not considered large enough and Christ Church's endowment was not considered sufficient either. Millen's paper in 1950 is clearly meant to respond to these problems identified by the Church Commissioners. He argues that although the population returns for the District have stated that the number of people living in the area was 1,500 more recently it had grown to around 3,000 because many of the houses had been turned into flats. Furthermore, while the assured income of the church (the endowment) was only £160 and the recommended figure set by the Commissioners was £500, Millen names four other churches in Bath whose endowments are below £500 and notes that the endowment of the mother church of the parish of St Swithin Walcot is only £198.

As a result, a new commission was set up in 1952 to examine the matter again and recommended that not only should Christ Church have a parish comprising the existing Conventional District but that it should take on responsibility for the whole of the west end of the Walcot Parish. However, also in 1952 a new Rector (the Revd Musgrave Brown) arrived at Walcot and in a memorandum dated 11th July 1953 the Parish objected to this idea for three reasons. First, it would deprive Walcot of 5/8ths of its population and 2/3rds of its area. Second, it would diminish the income of the Rector through loss of fees and the chaplaincy of the ENT hospital. Third, it would make Christ Church the parish church of Walcot, in fact if not in name, and would leave Walcot with the working class portion of the parish. The outcome of this was

that no new parish was created and that at the end of 1955, the Bishop of Bath & Wells and the Rector of Walcot signed another legal agreement re-establishing Christ Church's Conventional District and the right of the Rector to nominate the minister.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, in the 1970s the church of St Andrew's was rebuilt within the new St Andrew's VA School, which effectively prevented this proposal of splitting the parish into two halves from ever surfacing again.

#### 3.4.4 Summary & Responses

This historical recovery of Christ Church's past has ascertained that there have been three direct appeals in 1813, 1900 and 1952 to successive central Church of England authorities (Queen Anne's Bounty, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, the Church Commissioners) to set up a separate parish for Christ Church independently of Walcot Parish. These have all been turned down for a variety of reasons and when those reasons are addressed new problems have surfaced but, in particular, the questions of patronage and endowment have proved crucial. In addition, there have been two Diocesan Commissions in 1898 and 1952 plus a plan from the Diocesan Reorganization Committee in 1942 which have all recommended that Christ Church should have a separate parish. None of which have come to fruition. Furthermore, the evidence also suggests that during this period consecutive Diocesan Bishops have been in favour of the idea of a separate parish for Christ Church. At a purely functional level there are four significant points here:

- 1) Even the original founders with apparent good will between Christ Church and Walcot Parish could not solve the problem of creating a separate parish for what began as what we might now call a 'church plant'.

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<sup>29</sup> "NOW THEREFORE in variation of the Agreement of 1947 the Rector and the Bishop hereby agree that the Rector shall from time to time after consultation with the Parochial Church Council of Christ Church, choose and nominate a Minister and that the Bishop may (if he approves the minister so chosen and nominated) license such minister to serve the said Church and Conventional District hereinbefore referred to and described in Preaching the Word of God and in reading the Common Prayers and performing all other Ecclesiastical duties belonging to the Office of Minister with power for the persons resident in the said Conventional District to elect a Parochial Church Council and to collect and disburse the Offertories arising from said District." (An agreement between Francis Clement Musgrave Musgrave-Brown, Rector of Walcot St Swithin and the Bishop of Bath & Wells dated 19th December 1955.

- 2) There is a fundamental ambiguity over Christ Church's relationship to the Parish of Walcot and the wider city of Bath which goes right back to its foundation documents.
- 3) It seems that when there is a good personal relationship between the Rector of Walcot and the Officiating Minister(s) of Christ Church the relationship between the churches has been easier.
- 4) The unresolved question of succession has frequently caused tension between the two groupings.

This section has explored how Christ Church had framed its ministry and mission in unusual circumstances and how I have attempted to make sense of it. The complicating factor from my perspective as researcher is that, during the research process I also became the Officiating Minister at the Church. That altered the nature of my sensemaking project, as I described in **Figures 3.2a – 3.2c**, changing my approach from reflection on organizational observation to reflection on organizational participation. I shall conclude this part by reflecting on my Christ Church narrative thus far, before re-establishing the links between my two innermost contextual hermeneutic circles – Christ Church and the Chaplaincy Centre.

I am extremely grateful to several of the participants in the story narrated here for reading through the original draft of this section during October and November 1995. These included the Rt Revd Jim Thompson, the Ven. John Burgess, the Revd Marcus Braybrooke, Professor David Sims, the Revd Graham Dodds, Mrs Jo John, Dr Douglas Peters, Mrs Yvonne Morris, Sir Mark and Lady Margaret Heath, Mr John Metcalfe. Their comments and emendations have been very helpful in improving the general accuracy of this account. Nevertheless, I must take full responsibility for any remaining errors and omissions. Overall, the comments from those at Christ Church were favourable. For example, Margaret Heath thought it was "very fair" (letter dated 17th October 1995) while David Sims commented on Sections 3 and 5:

There was lots there that I did not know that I found really interesting, and lots that seemed to complete pictures for me where I had known maybe part of the story, *and it made a whole lot more sense with the work that you had done around it.* (Letter dated 22 October 1995)

However, there were concerns that significant parts of the story had been left out or not given their full place. In a meeting with the bishop on 10th November he said that he felt that my version "let the congregation off the hook" and that the diocese were perceived as being more at fault than the congregation for what happened. He was concerned that Christ Church only wanted to be part of the Church of England on its own terms and had failed to recognize that there would have to be compromise on its part. This was echoed by John Burgess a few days earlier when I saw him and he stated that the only future he could see for Christ Church was as part of the parochial system, ie as part of Walcot Parish. But, from another angle, Douglas Peters commented on the issue of Christ Church's representation on Church's governing bodies:

So far as I can see, you do not mention the denial of representation of Christ Church on deanery or diocesan synods ... If Christ Church came to distrust those in authority, this matter can hardly have done other than support this distrust. You may remember that this edict from the Diocese was made known by letter dated 29th December 1986 to Rev Marcus Braybrooke, 16 whole years after Synodical government had been in place. To my knowledge, Christ Church at no time received any explanation as to the hows and whys of this. (Letter dated 26th October 1995)

In addition, one of the churchwardens at Christ Church, John Metcalfe, felt that the actions of the Suffragan Bishop of the Diocese, the Rt Revd Nigel McCulloch, in proceeding with the Team Scheme after the Church Council had voted against it (during the period between the departure of Bishop George Carey and the arrival of Bishop Jim Thompson) also caused ill feeling in the church.

As I consciously omitted both of these elements from the story perhaps I should comment, as author, on my reasons. First, I can see no conceivable benefit for a church to be at loggerheads with its diocese or with other Anglican churches in its locality. There is a tendency in Christianity and other religions (and even in the so-called secular world!) to demonize those who disagree with us. While, in no way



would I want to accuse Douglas Peters or John Metcalfe of this (after all, Dr Peters was not a member of Christ Church) I did not want to provide oxygen for a potential flame and to discover that my narrative had colluded with such a process. Second, with hindsight, I'm not sure how much option Nigel McCulloch had in sending the Team Scheme on to the Church Commissioners – in the absence of the diocesan bishop. As I understand it he was starting a process of discussion about the idea not giving tacit assent to the scheme itself. Though, in mitigation, that was not clear to Christ Church at the time. Third, as I discovered more about events in the past (outlined in 3.4) I came to the conclusion that the power of the Diocese to effect events was much less than it had appeared in the heat of the Team Scheme debate and that decisions taken in Wells were not the threat they once appeared. The future of Christ Church rested in the hands of the local church itself not in some imagined foe twenty miles away. In essence, these elements of the story were not aspects that I wished to incorporate into the metanarrative I was constructing.<sup>30</sup>

For much of its history Christ Church has been regarded as either an institutional anachronism or an organizational anomaly. The solution has always been to bring it within the system and then all will be well. I shall argue below that this approach is fundamentally mistaken because Christ Church is indicative of more fundamental tensions within the Church of England and, indeed, within Christianity. However, before I address those issues I must conclude the story of Christ Church and the Chaplaincy Link following the withdrawal of the team scheme. In the months that followed the arrival of the letter from the Church Commissioners Christ Church was invited by the Diocesan Bishop to think through their future. This process involved the bringing together of Christ Church with some discussions that had been taking place between the Chaplaincy and its various ecumenical partners about the possibility of funding and appointing a lay assistant.

## 3.5 Of Links and Lay Assistants

### 3.5.1 Introduction

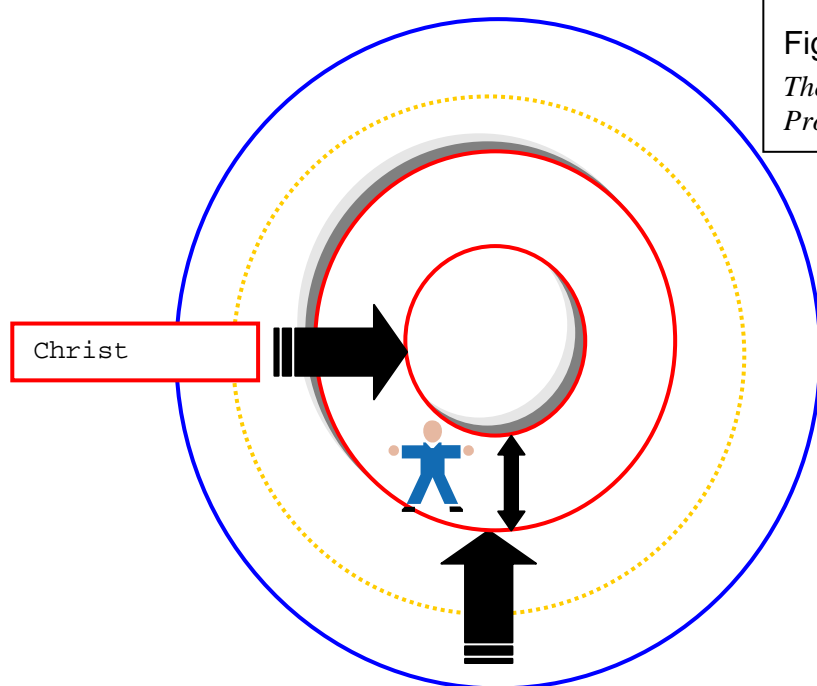
It may appear at this stage in Section 3 that my sensemaking metaphor of the body elaborated in previous sections has taken on the semblance of a phantom or a

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<sup>30</sup> See Section 5 for further discussion of story and metanarrative in this context.

disembodied Cartesian cogito. That is not the case, however. I noted the body metaphor in my discussion of Christ Church's origins in the introduction to **3.4**, where I argued that for Daubeny it was an image for the unity of the Church. By contrast, Daubeny's plan of encouraging voluntary subscriptions to set up a free church was the action of someone who was already working in a society which was a pluralist body of people. In that respect, Christ Church anticipates the contemporary context of the Church's ministry as a whole and I shall explore in more detail the embodied nature of Christ Church in Section 5 (**5.3.3**). Furthermore, it was within this context of pluralist understanding of body, society and church that the Anglican link with Christ Church developed. In this final part of this narrative about Christ Church I shall examine how one of the key elements of that link – the lay assistant project – came about through applying the equivocal notions of the body that Daubeny worked with, rather than the univocal understanding he espoused.

From 1989 to 1991 the Chaplaincy had, as a member of the Chaplaincy team, a full-time Lay Chaplain employed as an assistant to the Roman Catholic Chaplain, who was also a full-time appointment, although his time was divided between the University, the HE college and numerous language schools. Initially the post was fund by a Catholic trust, but when those funds ceased an extra student was provided with accommodation at the Catholic Chaplaincy to help cover costs. When the Lay Chaplain left in 1991 he was not replaced.



**Figure 3.3**  
*The Lay Assistant  
Project in context of this*

In August 1993 a former Bath student, Chris Smaling started work as the full-time Lay Assistant to the University Chaplain and was a practical outcome from the Anglican link between Christ Church and the Chaplaincy. In that respect, the Lay Assistant stands on the boundary between the two and in many senses was an important 'embodiment' of the Chaplaincy's Anglican link (**Figure 3.3**).

### 3.5.2 Getting Started

One of the problems I found of trying to build a financial coalition proved to be finding one partner who is willing to commit funding independently of another. The process began with an informal chat with the University's Secretary and Registrar in the Spring of 1992. I mentioned the idea of a former University of Bath student being a Lay Assistant at the Chaplaincy and he seemed to warm to the idea. My enquiry about financial support from the University was turned down, but while they couldn't help with the Assistant's salary there was a possibility that they could help "in kind" for example by providing accommodation. Armed with this commitment I wrote the Archdeacon of Bath to see whether the Diocese might also come on board with a grant. The reply was not encouraging:

15th May 1992

Dear Vaughan

Thank you for your letter about the possibility of a Chaplain's Assistant. We have already missed the boat for 1993, and the budget is now fixed. It would mean making a case to the Diocesan Synod in the Summer of next year for a new work approach for the Academic Year 94/95. Frankly it will not succeed.

We are very strapped for cash, and we are looking to close posts rather than open new ones. I am afraid this is a common diocesan problem at the moment, as you may well have read in the national press. So I think any such post would have to be entirely funded from external sources. The job situation is getting tighter everyday.

But there is, of course, another consideration. Even if a new work bid were approved, for 94/95, are we not coming perilously close to decisions about the future of your own contract? And from what I know of the University accounts, I doubt if even the provision of accommodation,

would be a real possibility in the light of the academic cuts. I think we all face a rather tough time financially.

With best wishes.

Yours sincerely

J E Burgess

My reply the following month stressed the planned increase in student numbers for the University of Bath and argued that whoever was in post in the future would have to face a much greater workload than at the time of the last appointment in 1989. The Archdeacon's response two days later (12th June 1992) was to suggest that if the proposal was to go forward then contact should be made with the Diocesan Director of Education, the Revd Preb John Parfit. John Parfit and I met during the summer and I came away with his farewell document to the diocese entitled: The Role of the Diocesan Board of Education During the Next Decade. John was about to retire and, although he was sympathetic to the position of the chaplaincy, he would not be around to help carry any new ideas forward. The appointment of a new Director of Education could also take some time.

Nevertheless the Chaplaincy submitted some figures in October 1992 and sent a copy of these preliminary figures to the Archdeacon of Bath, the Venerable John Burgess. The response to this proposal came on 11th December and stated:

re: University of Bath Chaplaincy Assistant

Further to your request earlier this term that the Diocese give consideration to the creation and financial support of the above post, the matter has now been considered by both the Further Education Committee and the Diocesan Board of Education.

Both bodies expressed much sympathy with the proposal, but noted that the Diocesan Synod is likely to face severe financial constraints when it prepares its budget for 1994. In view of this, plus the fact that it is to be hoped the Assistant will minister to students from all the main Christian Churches, would it be possible to approach both the Free Churches and

the Roman Catholic Church in Bath to ascertain if they are willing to assist with the funding of this post. If they were, then I think the Diocese would give more favourable consideration to the question of financial support.

Encouraged with this promise of "favourable consideration" the Diocesan Board of Education and a pledge of support from the University I set off to approach the other partners in the chaplaincy from the different denominations, and the story took another turn.

### 3.5.3 Possible Partners

The other chaplains in the team had also been seeking support for HE ministry through various avenues as my response to the Board of Education outlined:

Manvers St Baptist Church have already appointed a voluntary lay worker to help with the Baptist side of things; Walcot Methodist Church are actively exploring the possibility of employing a lay assistant to help with their work (which may include some work with the student Methodist Society; and the Diocese of Clifton have also been looking for someone to support their university and parish work.

Nevertheless, since the Catholic Diocese of Clifton seemed to be the denomination with fewest immediate plans so I wrote to Bishop Mervyn Alexander first of all. When the reply came from the Diocese of Clifton in February, it too seemed positive (certainly of the principle of having an assistant and of ecumenical co-operation) though there was also a note of caution:

Both Brian McEvoy and Tom Gunning are enthusiastic for the appointment of a Chaplaincy Assistant at the University, and they speak highly of the work that JP did in that capacity. I am sure that Clifton would like to help. But of course we are very short of money like everyone else at the moment, and it is not easy to keep up existing commitments, let alone take on fresh ones. I will consult the Finance

Office and see what can be done, but I would not like to raise your hopes unduly.

With the commitment from the University to provide accommodation; plus a commitment from the Church of England to support the project if our ecumenical partners did together with a positive response from the Roman Catholic Diocese the next move was to contact the Free Churches (ie the Baptists, Methodists and URC). In the first instance the Board of Education suggested that a letter to Ian Mills, the Ecumenical Officer for the Somerset and South Avon Ecumenical Council. His response was that the denominations should be written to directly, therefore I wrote to: the URC Moderator for SW England; the Baptist Superintendent – Western Area; and the Methodist District Chairman.

Their responses were not very encouraging:

I have to say that within the present financial climate of our Baptist Union the possibility of securing any funding from national resources for this post is very unlikely.

(The Revd Dr Roger Hayden, Baptist General Superintendent Western Area, 7 May 1993)

there are one or two prior questions that need to be addressed. For example how many members are there on the Chaplaincy team and are there other lay appointments under consideration by our sister denominations? Is the Chaplaincy Team fully Ecumenical and recognized as such by the supporting denominations. The draft cost of £7,200 presumably is for the first year and therefore what increment do we anticipate having to pay and over what time is the appointment to run? I pose these points just to indicate some of the areas we need to look at ... I hope my comments are helpful as we seek to find a way forward. We are very much at the early stages and, given the present financial climate, I cannot be over optimistic as to the possible outcome.

(The Revd Ian T White, Chairman of Methodist Bristol District, 10 May 1993)

I felt a good deal of dismay when I read your letter to note the very poor understanding of ecumenism. You indicated that discussions had already taken place with the Diocese of Bath & Wells and the Diocese of Clifton. I cannot understand in these days why a more equal approach was not adopted and all the various churches contacted together ... With your prior consultations with the two dioceses, I just wonder if any help from the three Free Churches is really wanted. It seems to me that we really ought to start again by convening those who have responsibility within the five denominations for such work and ask how extra help might be made available from the resources of everyone.

(The Revd Michael Hubbard, Moderator of the United Reformed Church South Western Province, 4 May 1993)

The Revd John Rackley, the Baptist Chaplain, and others in the Baptist Church encouraged me to take the idea further, while at the same time counselling that money was very tight. In a further letter to the URC Moderator, I attempted to explain why the two Dioceses had already been approached but his reply was just as negative. The local Methodist Church was pressing ahead with its own appointment of a Lay Worker who would have student responsibilities and that, together with a number of other developments, made me consider whether that might be a more productive model to follow.

Having secured tentative promises of help from the University, the Diocese of Bath & Wells and the Diocese of Clifton, my initial enquiries of the Free Churches had not been encouraging. However, while investigations had been going on about how to take the issue forward to the Free Churches some of these areas of support had begun to look decidedly shaky. A letter to Mgr Mitchell asking for some idea of how much Clifton Diocese might be able to contribute produced no formal response, but an informal word through "the grapevine" that there was no money available this year. The follow-up of the University's offer of accommodation yielded this reply:

... Coming to the point of accommodation, I have had some strong reaction to the fact that the University, especially in the autumn and spring

terms, does not have a surfeit of accommodation and how would he or she relate to the student body if a place was found? From a financial point of view, the residences account would of course be looking for payment for accommodation if it was provided and that means that some budget would have to meet that expense and, as such, would that expense come as a higher priority to the many requests and demand that we have before us? I put these points down in writing not to be in any way obstructive, but to be practical in the way in which we approach such a possible arrangement. ... (R M Mawditt, Secretary & Registrar, University of Bath, 18 March 1993)

To follow up the potential support of the Diocese of Bath & Wells a paper was prepared for their Further Education Committee which, at the time, was considering the provision of chaplains for FE colleges. Although provision of ministerial support in a university was not really the remit of that group, it was the closest approximating in the diocesan structure to a suitable forum for considering the issues. The meeting on 17th June 1993 received the paper with courtesy and understanding, making the following points: (1) They were not a funding body as such, and could only go to the Diocese and recommend courses of action. They had no budget as such; (2) While they understood the pressures on HE institutions, their primary role was to argue the case for FE colleges and there was some concern that this could well be compromised if they took up HE problems as well.

It looked as if the only alternative root was, as the Archdeacon of Bath had pointed out early on, through the Diocesan Synod. But since I was not on that synod, knew nothing about its processes and elections for it were over a year away, it seemed as if the three original partners for this project – the University, the Diocese of Bath & Wells and the ecumenical partners had all closed off their approach routes.

#### 3.5.4 An Alternative Partnership

Since the verger of Christ Church, Walter Burt, and his wife Kath had moved out of number 2 Christ Church Cottages in 1990 it had remained empty. This was a matter of some concern for the Trustees and was mentioned in several conversations by their Chairman the Venerable John Burgess, Archdeacon of Bath. It was also a worry for



the Church Council, as a letter from the secretary of the Council to the secretary of the Trustees dated 5th October 1992 indicates.<sup>31</sup> The response from the Secretary of the Trustees was two-fold. First to assure the Church Council that the necessary work was to start soon and, second, to ask the Council how they would like to see the cottage used. This was an important catalyst in the process of starting to investigate a role for Christ Church in the Lay Assistant project. The negotiations with our ecumenical partners had already indicated that this was a path that other Link Churches were exploring this avenue in different ways. The Methodist Chaplain was hoping that Walcot Methodist Church would appoint a paid, part-time lay worker who would have a role within the Chaplaincy Team and the Baptist Chaplain had already found a lay person from the congregation at Manvers Street Baptist Church to help as his associate at the University, though in a voluntary capacity.

A draft proposal was put together by the Standing Committee for the Church Council (Appendix 7) which included a number of proposals, summarised in the conclusion:

- 1) The ministry at Christ Church should essentially be a people's ministry.
- 2) The Reverend Vaughan Roberts should be invited to be officiating minister, working with the present team of clergy and lay readers.
- 3) A lay assistant should be appointed, paid by Christ Church to undertake administration at Christ Church and the University Chaplaincy.

This proposal included the idea that when No 2 Christ Church Cottages was renovated it would be let to three students and the rents would pay the salary of the lay assistant, while accommodation was provided free at the University. The full paper was put before the Church Council on 14th Jan and by a majority vote it was agreed to put the proposal to congregational meeting the following Sunday (17th Jan). Because of the nature of the subject under discussion I did not attend either meeting but the secretary

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<sup>31</sup> Jo John, the Secretary to the Church Council, wrote "At the last meeting of the Christ Church Council on September 30th considerable concern was expressed over the length of time that the cottage previously occupied by the Verger has been empty. The Council are aware that there is work to be done to bring the accommodation up to standard, but they find it particularly worrying in the light of the work done by the Christ Church Homeless Fund and I was asked to convey their concern to the Trustees."

notes in her minutes that the Church Council meeting was: "conducted in a most congenial atmosphere and was constructive and positive." While at the congregational meeting: "There was a consensus of opinion that the Draft Proposal should be sent forward to the Bishop. The Secretary has now done that." Without this undertaking from Christ Church it is unlikely that the Lay Assistant project would ever have got off the ground. It was the church's commitment (with a few exceptions) to the Chaplaincy's Anglican Link which enabled the idea to go forward and it was subsequently supported by a local Church of England trust and money raised through an appeal to honorary graduates organised by the first Lay Assistant, Chris Smaling.

### 3.5.5 Conclusion

Despite the agreement of Christ Church that the Revd Vaughan Roberts "should be invited to be officiating minister, working with the present team of clergy and lay readers" and the statement from the Diocesan Bishop that "Negotiations should be opened between University, Christ Church, Rural Dean and Lay Chairman about the link" neither of these proposals went forward despite pressure from a number of quarters. I was de facto Officiating Minister because I did the tasks that the Officiating Minister was expected to but this position was never regularised by the Diocese. Why was this the case? It seemed clear to me that the Archdeacon of Bath, John Burgess, was resolutely against the idea of an Anglican link from the outset and would be a key player on the Bishop's staff and the University Council in taking these propositions ahead. Any representations to the diocese to work at these plans was met by silence or the comment that Christ Church's trust deed needed to be sorted out first. My two-year extension to my original five year appointment came to an end in August 1997 and I left the post in December of that year. Even though John had already retired by then, there seemed little political will in the Diocese to see these ideas through, even though my eventual successor as University Chaplain indicated that he would be willing to take on both spheres of duty (the Chaplaincy and Christ Church) when he came for an informal look round. By then, matters were in hand for the Revd Anthony Claridge the former headteacher of Oldfield Girls School in Bath to take on the role of Officiating Minister at Christ Church.

### 3.6 Conclusion: Towards Embodiment

It is clear that Christ Church and the Chaplaincy Centre are organizational anomalies within the Church of England's parochial structure. I shall go on to consider how their stories developed together in Section 5 but it is appropriate to make some comments here by way of an introduction to the important but neglected topic to be discussed in Section 4. What is the most appropriate way to respond to their situations and their stories? From my experience there is little or no expectation in the Diocese of Bath & Wells that the Chaplaincy ought to become part of the parochial structure. However, there is a widespread view that work in higher education chaplaincies is not 'proper' ministry, which was reflected in my early conversation with the Archdeacon of Bath recounted in my introduction and in Barry Morgan's research into the role of chaplains (2.3). Yet there was clearly an expectation that Christ Church as a church ought to become part of the parochial system (3.2), indeed for a good deal of its history Christ Church itself actively sought to bring about this change (3.4). The organizational solution which this thesis narrates takes the contrary view on both matters, arguing that as anomalies both the Chaplaincy Centre and Christ Church have something important to offer the wider Church precisely because of their unusual status. This relates directly back to the Ricoeurian ideas about dialectical self and 'other' elaborated in Section 1 (1.3.2). Just as it is only through meeting an 'other' that we can develop a hermeneutic of 'self', so it is through meeting a group which is different, anomalous or strange that a sensemaking organizational hermeneutic emerges.

However, there is something to be wary of at this point, as Julia Kristeva has pointed out in her exploration of the 'stranger':

Let us not seek to solidify, to turn the otherness of the foreigner into a thing. Let us merely touch it, brush by it, without giving it permanent structure. Simply sketching out its perpetual motion through some of its variegated aspects spread out before our eyes today, through some of its former, changing representations scattered throughout history. Let us escape its hatred, its burden, fleeing them not through levelling and

forgetting, but through harmonious repetition of the differences it implies and spreads. (Kristeva 1991: 3)

The danger of seeking to solidify is that this process turns into scapegoating at an individual and communal level.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, it is something of a disembodied stranger that we meet in Kristeva's foreigner – strikingly akin to Peter C. Hodgson's disembodied church which we encountered in **1.4.2**. I argued then that an embodied gestalt must embrace the "inconvenient specificity" of 'being' or organization. It is my contention that, for the Church at least, encounters with strangers or engagement with that which is 'other' has been given a permanent but dialectical structure through, what Kristeva calls, its "changing representations scattered through history". Furthermore, for the Church as an organization, that historical representation of meeting that which is 'other' has been embodied ironically in the narrative of the missing body of Jesus. It is the story of Jesus' body, which we must explore next.

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<sup>32</sup> On scapegoating in the story of Christ Church see 5.3.3 (iv).



## Section 4

### Conversations about the Origins of the Church

*Who is this that comes in splendour, coming blazing from the East?*

*This is he we had not thought of, this is he the airy Christ ...*

*he does not wish that men should love him more than anything*

*Because he died; he only wishes they would hear him sing.*

from "The Airy Christ" by Stevie Smith (Smith 1983)

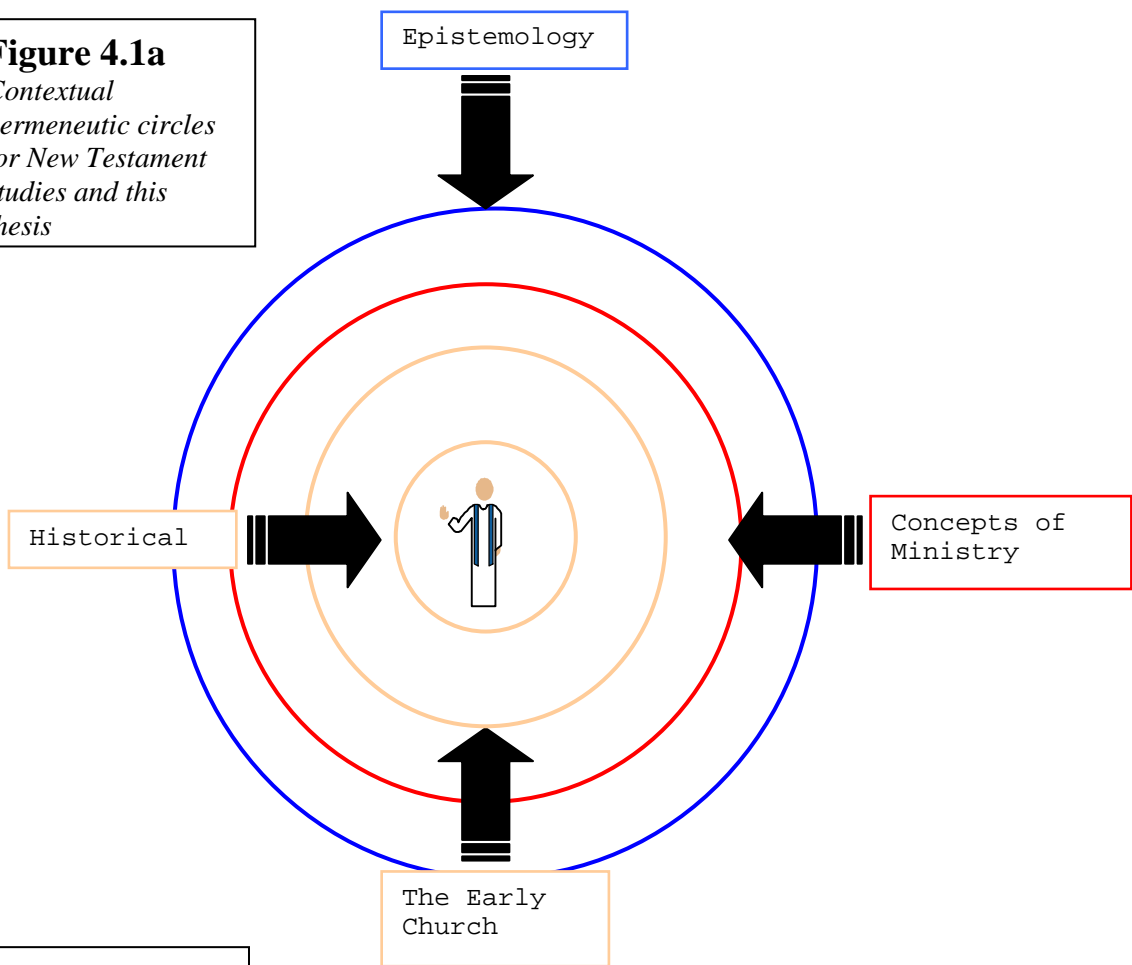
## 4.1 Introduction

Stevie Smith's poem *The Airy Christ* is one that I keep coming back to. On the surface, the poet appears to be critical of modernising tendencies towards the gospels, yet there is also something wistful and beguiling, powerful and beautiful about her description of the "airy One". It is this sense of the elusive Christ, which is also reflected in the search by historians for the 'Jesus of history'. In some respects, as far as my methodological analogy of the GP's consulting room is concerned, what follows is a return to a narrative from the 'text books'. In other respects however, this could be seen as an 'experiential' account because an historical understanding of the New Testament narratives is important to me personally and, as Albert Schweitzer pointed out, it is impossible to avoid the personal in this important subject (Schweitzer (1954 [1906])). It was the main component of my degree at Bangor and remains an area of interest. A second, key element of this thesis has been pluralism in the contemporary Church – specifically with regard to the Chaplaincy Centre at the University of Bath and Christ Church, Julian Road. Against this background the theologian Edward Farley has provided a perceptive description of plurality in a religious context:

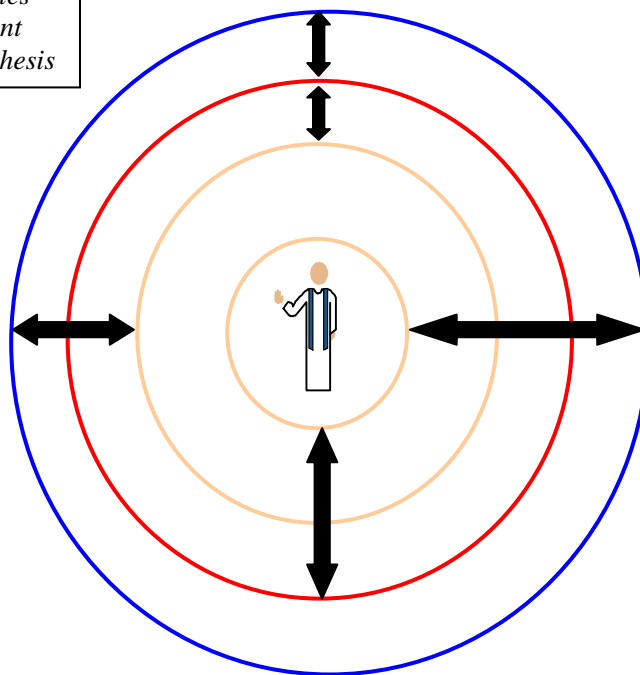
A religious community in its linguistic aspect is a very confusing item. It presents a linguistic kaleidoscope of constantly changing types of linguistic entities: doctrines, myths, historical narratives, personal stories and autobiographies, images, theological arguments and concepts, and ceremonial expressions. The confusion is extended when the community of faith in a specific historical situation identifies one stratum among these entities as absolutely definitive. (Farley 1975: 112)

These elements of pluralism and historical perspectives on Jesus and the early Church will be explored in this section. I shall examine some of the diverse sensemaking narratives of the contemporary Church's historical context. In the original diagram of this research in my Preface (**Figure 1a**), this contextual hermeneutical circle was shown as a broken line to indicate its elusive presence. 'Elusive' in the sense that despite its recognized importance to some writers on the Church (e.g. Shepherd 1983, Sykes 1984, Sedgwick 1990, Bosch 1991), discussion of this subject is largely absent from Church of England reports into the nature of its ministry.

**Figure 4.1a**  
Contextual  
hermeneutic circles  
for New Testament  
studies and this  
thesis



**Figure 4.1b**  
Interaction of  
contextual  
hermeneutic circles  
for New Testament  
studies and this  
thesis



By way of introduction to Section 4, I will review the contextual hermeneutical circles to which New Testament studies relate as set out already in this thesis before providing a diagram of the detailed context that I will be addressing in this section (**Figures 4.1a and 4.1b**).

In Section 2 I examined my kaleidoscopic experience of pluralism in the Chaplaincy at the University of Bath. This included: (i) the variety of titles for the job of chaplain itself, which was indicative of the multiple nature of the roles; (ii) the different ways in which the Anglican church has perceived the role of chaplaincies in the post war period and the way that plurality provided space for a variety of perspectives to co-exist; and (iii) some of the sharp edged conflict which that plurality caused within the Chaplaincy's ecumenical mission. From these experiences I took the decision to overtly affirm and encourage pluralism within the Chaplaincy, not just as a means of managing the conflictual elements of chaplaincy life but also for educational reasons. In my view higher education should be about encouraging students to learn, discover and take responsibility for themselves and not about creating an organizational structure for the sake of a chaplain or a church. If a chaplaincy or a church could be part of that process all well and good, and one of the most effective ways I have seen of that happening is where a chaplaincy has the resources of its own centre and links with local churches. It was this background of pluralism which lead to a link being formed with Christ Church. In Section 3 I outlined how some of the sharp edges of diversity affected that church through the proposals for a team scheme its complex relationships with both the Diocese of Bath & Wells and the Parish of Walcot. In the same way that Barry Morgan's historical perspective on higher education chaplaincy helped my sensemaking processes as University Chaplain, so the historical perspectives on Christ Church's 'lost' story helped my sensemaking as, Officiating Minister of the church.

In my Preface I noted three components in my sensemaking methodology, namely (i) narrative, (ii) metaphor, and (iii) conversation. In that context, I spoke in Section 2 (**2.1**) of how: "When I moved on to become a chaplain at the University of Bath I took with me this rough organizational sketch of the Church as 'a body' and set about seeing how it would shape my new circumstances." In this section I shall provide a narrative of my conversations about the place of the body metaphor in early



Christianity. I have focussed on two particular areas: (i) the Historical Jesus (**4.2**) and (ii) the role of the body metaphor in 1 Corinthians (**4.3**), and I will explain the reasons for this choice in the introduction to each discussion. Within my thesis' methodology of the contextual cogito it is important to note that what follows is set within the wider epistemological framework that I outlined in Section 1. Furthermore, this part of my sensemaking narrative both informs and shapes other aspects of it – especially my understanding of 'ministry' in terms of the Chaplaincy Centre and Christ Church. Hence the pattern of this section is as in **Figures 4a** and **4b**.

## 4.2 Jesus & The Body

It is a natural human curiosity to wish to inquire into the historical actuality of Jesus and of the beginnings of a movement so formative and influential in our European history and culture – a curiosity which the historical difficulties only arouse further and do nothing to diminish.  
(Dunn 1991: 16)

Underlying issues concerning the ministry of churches and individuals within churches are a series of questions relating to the foundation story of Christianity. Most immediately, there are the questions about the nature of the ministry and message of Jesus himself. After a period of well over 200 years, historical criticism has had a considerable effect on how those within and without the Church see the central figure of Christianity. On a broader canvas, the implications of how historians have assessed Jesus' ministry could have (potentially at least) a major impact on how the Church sees its role in the world. Therefore it seems surprising, given the fundamental importance of such questions, that within the local, national and trans-national churches as organizations very little attention seems to be given to this research by those writing about churches as institutions.

The striking fact is that the major reports produced by the Church of England during the 1980s on its ministry to society and its own internal organization for that ministry have been eerily silent about Jesus (CATB 1982; Tiller 1983; ACCUPA 1985; ACORA 1990; AGTE 1990). Other works on the nature of priesthood and/or the ministry of the Church have tended to evade this issue (Reed 1978; Russell 1980;

Wedderspoon 1981; Carr 1985; Davies, Watkins & Winter 1991; Reader 1994). There are exceptions to this general rule and David Sheppard's *Bias to the Poor* (Sheppard 1985) and Peter Sedgwick's *Mission Impossible?* (Sedgwick 1990) are good examples of works which take seriously the challenge that the search for the historical Jesus makes to organizational sensemaking in the Church. Another recent analysis which takes seriously a critical hermeneutic of the Gospels and how that affects perceptions of the Church's mission is David Bosch's extensive work *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Bosch 1991). He works with the same paradigm framework as Hans Küng (see 1.1) and contends that it is:

the events at the origin of the Christian community – the "agenda" set by Jesus living, dying, and rising from the dead – that basically and primarily established the distinctiveness of that community. (Bosch 1991: 22)<sup>33</sup>

This is the 'agenda' which I shall be exploring in Section 4. However the question of the historical Jesus is currently one of the most fecund of all the New Testament bodies of knowledge (Sanders 1985: 1-58; Crossan 1991: xxvii-xxxiv; Wright 1996: 3-27; Theissen & Merz 1998: 1-15). That, in turn, has given rise to a wide variety of conflicting and overlapping views on how Jesus is to be viewed 'historically'. Nevertheless it is important to bear in mind that, despite all the historical claims, what is being discussed is a theoretical construct of the community of New Testament historians in their post-Enlightenment context (Borg 1987: 8-17; Meier 1991: 1-14). In this respect, Dieter Georgi (Georgi 1992) and Alister McGrath (McGrath 1994 [1987]) have both argued in different ways that, with respect to the quest for the historical Jesus, it is now possible to see the origins and pursuit of that quest in terms of wider social and philosophical developments, as opposed to being a 'neutral' and

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<sup>33</sup> Cf Brueggemann's image of the biblical narrative as 'compost': "The Bible consists in biodegradable material that will be willingly cast off, but it can be retrieved. As is often the case with such compost, it contains seeds of its own. It sprouts and grows more than and other than we had in mind. I take this metaphor as an alternative to the notion that the Bible is a guide for the gardener. I think not. Its only guidance is that this material is dangerously generative and that the life it can produce is limited by what is in the deposit" (Brueggemann 1993: 62).

'objective' historical exercise.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, in what follows, it should be remembered any statement about the 'historical' Jesus needs to be seen as a contextual statement located as much in our contemporary social and historical framework as in the past.

Since the babble of voices on this subject has been so intense it is tempting to either ignore it, as in the numerous Church of England reports, or advocate some other means of approaching the subject (e.g. Hamilton 1993: 1-21). Although there was a period when Barth and Bultmann seemed to have extinguished the flames of debate about the historical Jesus, the smouldering embers were re-ignited by Bultmann's pupil Ernst Käseman (Käseman 1953)<sup>35</sup> and have continued to burn ever more fiercely (Marshall 1979 [1977]; Schillebeeckx 1979; Rowland 1985; McGrath 1994 [1987]; Wright 1996). An assessment of the present state of debate regarding Jesus and historical research must be a *sine qua non* of any attempt at exploring the mission of the organization which emerged from his teaching and the 'primary group' of his first disciples (Dudley & Hilgert 1987; Malina 1995).<sup>36</sup> Any statement regarding the 'assured results' of Jesus research will be disputable, so I shall begin by outlining what I see as the most basic picture of Jesus' life (4.2.1). Then I will focus on one of the few aspects over which there is some measure of agreement, namely Jesus' practice of open table-fellowship (4.2.2) before looking at its significance in Jesus' death which was centred physically and symbolically on Jesus' own body (4.2.3).

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<sup>34</sup> Georgi states: "I observe the main cause in the continuous social and historical situation of the whole quest for the historical Jesus, that is, its location within the evolution of bourgeois consciousness, not just as an ideal but as an expression of a socio-economic and political momentum." (Georgi 1992: 83) While McGrath locates origins of the quest within the specific social conditions which encouraged the Enlightenment in Protestant Germany: "From its inception, Protestantism recognized the importance of higher education in the training of its ministers." So when the German universities became centres of revolt against the *ancien régime*, "German university theologians (who were virtually entirely Protestant) aligned themselves with the Enlightenment" (McGrath 1994 [1987]: 19).

<sup>35</sup> For criticism of Käseman's decision see Räisänen 1990: 67-68.

<sup>36</sup> Primary groups are characterised by: (i) small numbers; (ii) face-to-face interaction over a lengthy time frame; (iii) gathering around a strong leader; (iv) nicknames and in-jokes; (v) bickering rather than elaborate organization established group cohesion; (vi) personal anecdotes and stories also bind the group together. (Dudley & Hilgert 1987: 24-26)

#### 4.2.1 A Summary of Jesus' Life

Jesus was a Jew from Galilee who was baptised by John the Baptist. With the possible exception of being part of the Baptist's movement Jesus was not a member of an existing group amongst the many that there were in the Judaism of the time. There is very little evidence that he was a priest, a pharisee, an essene, a zealot or a member of the Qumran community. Sometime after his baptism Jesus himself began, in and around Galilee, his proclamation of the Kingdom of God. It is not entirely clear how Jesus envisaged this kingdom nor what role he would play in it. He was a faith healer who worked miracles as well as preaching to, and enjoying table-fellowship with those who were outside the ambit of the established religious institutions of his day. He also entered into debate with religious leaders about his interpretation of the Torah.

In the first three gospels Jesus is portrayed as being circumspect when speaking about himself personally. It is likely that he used the phrase "son of man" of himself, but it is not clear whether that was a circumlocution for himself or a title – perhaps referring back to a supernatural figure from Daniel 7: 13 (Roberts 1982). Jesus seems to have seen himself as the harbinger of God's kingdom, but whether he also saw himself as the Messiah is disputed. At some point Jesus felt that it was necessary to go to Jerusalem and confront the religious authorities that controlled the ritual and symbolic focus of the Jewish faith – the Temple. Here, there was a disturbance as Jesus objected to the way the Temple was being used. He celebrated a final meal with his disciples and was arrested, tried and put to death by crucifixion. After a short while his disciples had the experience that Jesus had come back to life, which they interpreted as a vindication of Jesus' message.

#### 4.2.2 Holiness, Food & Jesus' Body

Many historians currently agree that Jesus' practice of open table-fellowship was an important aspect of his teaching (Sanders 1985; Borg 1987; Crossan 1991; Dunn 1991; Chilton 1992; Witherington 1995; Wright 1996) and that it takes on an added significance within the purity codes of the Second Temple period. Most commentators also see this activity by Jesus as a genuine reflection of the whole pattern of his proclamation and teaching. Thus, for John Dominic Crossan, Jesus' meals and miracles were "a symbolic representation of unbrokered egalitarianism"

(Crossan 1991: 346). Whereas for Tom Wright, Jesus' attitude towards food was part of a wider social and religious understanding which indicated that:

Jesus was claiming that this one God was redefining Israel around himself and his kingdom-proclamation; that, as part of that work, the purity to which the Torah pointed would be achieved by the prophets' dream of a cleansed heart; and that, as a result, the traditions which attempted to bolster Israel's national identity were out of date and out of line. (Wright 1996: 398)

It might seem unusual from the perspective of the late 20th century to include, within a process of religious, cultural and organizational redefinition, an intention to eat with anyone and everyone. Yet, on this reading of Jesus' behaviour, such an approach does seem to have challenged certain basic elements of the symbolic world of Second Temple Judaism and it also provides the framework for understanding Jesus' actions in the Temple itself. Perhaps it should be stated at this point that I see Jesus' attempt at religious redefinition as a dynamic, which can be understood within the categories of Judaism. It is not an attempt to say that Judaism as an organised religion was all wrong and that, subsequently, institutional Christianity was all right – as this manifestly is not the case.

Jesus' dramatic actions in Judaism's most symbolic building, the Temple in Jerusalem, have rightly been singled out as the key to how he understood his work. The 'cleansing of the Temple' has been interpreted in many different ways. For S. G. F. Brandon it was an important piece of evidence for Jesus' nationalist and zealot sympathies (Brandon 1967). Whereas for E. P. Sanders it is a symbolic act in the style of the prophets designed to illustrate graphically that, in the imminent eschaton, the Temple was going to be destroyed (Sanders 1985). Bruce Chilton links these actions in the Temple with the frequent reports of Jesus eating food with his disciples and with those who were 'unclean'. By placing the turning over of the money-changers' tables in the context of the practice of purity within the Jewish faith, Chilton argues that Jesus was, in effect saying that: "God preferred a pure meal to impure sacrifice in the Temple" (Chilton 1992: 154). Dunn also places this event against the backcloth of Jewish purity but begins by noting that there is strong evidence in the

gospels that Jesus took a positive approach towards the institutions of Judaism. Not only is Jesus portrayed as regularly worshipping in synagogues, he is also shown as worshipping and teaching in the Temple (Lk 2: 41-51; Jn 5: 1; 7:10; Mk 14: 49; Mt 23: 37-9) and as taking a positive attitude to the Temple cult (Mt 5: 23-4; 17: 24-27) and Luke's account of Jesus' life specifically starts and finishes in the Temple itself. In separate traditions Jesus is also depicted as willing to work with the religious institutions and systems of his day when he heals people of leprosy (Mk 1: 44; Lk 17: 14).

Purity was literally at the heart of the Temple with its innermost sanctuary and Holiest of Holies protected from defilement by degrees. These included: numerous other chambers, outer courtyards, the city of Jerusalem and, ultimately, the land of Israel. Dunn argues that the issue of purity was one which attracted much concern in the 1st century, particularly with respect to three groups in Jewish society – the Priests, the Pharisees and the Essenes. The Priests were focused on the sanctuary itself in Jerusalem. The Pharisees appear to have been concerned with the broadening out of the rites of Temple purity into everyday life, while the Essenes rejected the Temple community in Jerusalem as defiled and set themselves up as an alternative Temple (leaving aside the vexed question of whether the Essenes and the Qumran community can be identified as one and the same). Therefore, Dunn maintains that:

concern for purity was characteristic of (what we would call today) practising Jews and particularly the most devout at the time of Jesus. And in each case it was stimulated by and given its point by the sanctity of the Temple ... Moreover, it is precisely in a sectarian context that differences over such 'minor' matters become the stuff of polemic and denunciation (Dunn 1991: 42).

In this context a number of the accounts of Jesus' life and teaching take on a different hue. Jesus is shown as: touching people who are unclean (Mk 1: 40-5); casting out unclean spirits and being accused of having one himself (Mk 3:11ff, 3: 30); quoting King David's disregard for the sanctity of the tabernacle (Mk 2: 25f); being linked with tombs, pigs and gentiles – all sources or symbols of impurity (Mk 5: 1-17); being touched by a woman in a state of ritual uncleanness (Mk 5: 25ff). In addition, the

whole of Mark chapter 7 is an extended discourse on what is clean and unclean. Sanders argues that Jesus was very close to the Pharisees in his concern for purity and that these traditions of Jesus having contact with matters that were impure represent a re-evaluation of Jesus' activity by the early church after the growing divergence with Rabbinic Judaism following the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE. However, that would mean taking a post-70 date for Mark's gospel, which would be disputed by others. By contrast a number of historians have drawn conclusions similar to those of Charlesworth:

Jesus attempted to shatter the boundaries that had been constructed by many Jewish groups to separate the pure from the impure and the righteous from the unrighteous. His movement attacked a concept of purification that was elevated after Herod increased the grandeur of the Temple. (Charlesworth 1988: 207 n 13)<sup>37</sup>

Questions of purity are linked to questions about the Jerusalem Temple and Jesus' actions there were clearly important. Dunn outlines four common interpretations. It was: (a) A Revolutionary Act – by someone intending to overthrow the political and religious order of the day; (b) A Symbolic Act – designed to call for an end to the sacrificial system centred there; (c) An Eschatological Act – in which Jesus is predicting the destruction of the Temple; (d) A Purifying Act – intending to show that the Temple needed to be sanctified before it could take on its eschatological role.

Some historians hold that Jesus' action in the Temple needs to be read alongside his symbolic action in the upper room (Hengel 1977; Hamerton-Kelly 1994; Wright 1996). It is in the context of the whole course of Jesus' activity and teaching (particularly his open table-fellowship) that his symbolic acts in the Temple and in the upper room need to be seen. These actions all focus on the sharing of physical

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<sup>37</sup> Cf In Dunn's opinion Jesus: "was so cavalier regarding purity, and popular despite that, [that it] could very well have been perceived as something of a threat to the whole religious system which centred on the Temple." (Dunn 1991: 44)

sustenance and Jesus' body.<sup>38</sup> In turn, Jesus' use of the metaphor of his body provides the framework for understanding his ultimate prophetic and messianic act. I would argue, therefore, that his journey to and death upon the cross was a combination of (b) and (c) above – i.e. a symbolic and eschatological act. This understanding of the symbolic role that food played in Jesus' ministry resonates with Falk's anthropological reading of body and food in wider society:

The body is characterized by a certain kind of openness – a theme which recurs in different variation within the anthropological field – primarily focused on the eating mouth. Sharing and incorporating food in a ritual meal implies the incorporation of the partakers into the community simultaneously defining his/her particular 'place' within it. Here the oral bidirectionality is actualized in and as eating: eating into one's body/self and being eaten into the community. The bond is created primarily by sharing (communion) and not by exchange ... Sharing implies a two-way open body while exchange implies a body and self which controls that which is given/said for what. (Falk 1997 [1974]: 20)

Yet, in terms of embodied dialectic, another element can be identified in the will to conflict and the will to consensus as contributing Jesus' death.

#### 4.2.3 An Embodied Summary of Jesus' Death

Jesus ate with those outside the purity markers set up by the established religious authorities and in that, and other actions, he announced the arrival of God's kingdom. Jesus frequently argued that exclusion from the religious institutions of Judaism did not mean exclusion from God's love, forgiveness or judgement. In addition, Jesus justified his claims through charismatic authority rather than authority of position, expertise, resources or any other kind. Furthermore, he stood in the prophetic tradition which believed God called for purity of heart before purity of sacrifice. Consequently, if God chose to destroy the Temple through the Romans, the essential

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<sup>38</sup> During supper he took bread, and having said the blessing he broke it and gave it to them, with the words: "Take this; this is my body." (Mark 14: 22 = Matthew 26: 26 = Luke 22: 19 = 1 Corinthians 11: 24)



part of the 'sacrifice' would be maintained in those who lived according to the spirit of the Torah as summed up in the two Great Commandments. God had judged the Temple and found it wanting (as on previous occasions) but this judgement was different because, in Jesus' mind, it had been judged by God's messiah. Thus, the covenant between Creator and created was now based on his body and his sacrifice and not on those sacrifices offered in the Temple which was now passing away. Jesus intended that his death would bring about a fundamental redefinition of the Jewish sacrificial system from within, along the lines that been previously advocated by numerous prophets. Hamerton-Kelly has described this redefinition as a complete inversion of the sacrificial system (Hamerton-Kelly 1994). Therefore in the drama of the Last Supper, instead of the worshipper giving to the god, the god is giving to the worshipper.<sup>39</sup> However, in addition to redefining sacred space, there is a more thoroughgoing redefinition of the boundaries of holiness which Jesus embodies in the death of his own body. At this point it is helpful to bear in mind Meier's observation that:

ancient Semitic thought, much more than our Western tradition of Aristotelian logic, delighted in paradoxical statements that held opposites in tension. (Meier 1991: 176)

In other words, in the Judaism of Jesus' time it would be possible to affirm the role of the Temple while, at the same time being critical of it. I have sought to employ a similar dialectical approach of affirmation and criticism in both my practical ministry and my theoretical reflections upon it. However it would be a serious error to make the straightforward connection and say that in using the paradoxical dynamics of consensus and conflict to redefine my role or that of the Church I was doing the same thing as Jesus. The danger of creating the historical Jesus in our own image has long

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<sup>39</sup> "The room substitutes for the temple, the table for the altar, the sharing of the food for the killing of the victim. Normally, the worshiper brings the offering into the sacred space; here, the upper room is the nonsacred counterpart of the holy of holies, and so the offering is made outside of sacred space. Thus, the sacrificial system is subverted by the reversal of the direction of its ritual logic." (Hamerton-Kelly 1994: 44)

been recognised by Albert Schweitzer<sup>40</sup> and been more recently reiterated by E. P. Sanders who, in his seminal work on the subject includes the following personal statement:

I am a liberal, modern, secularized Protestant, brought up in a church dominated by low christology and the social gospel. I am proud of the things that that religious tradition stands for. I am not bold enough, however, to suppose that Jesus came to establish it, or that he died for the sake of its principles. (Sanders 1985: 334)

In the context of the pluralism of church, society and academic disciplines the most I can say about this historical reconstruction is that it is this is my current understanding of Jesus which, in turn, informs my view of the Church and my role within that organization.<sup>41</sup> It is crucial to my perception that Jesus defined the sacrifice of his body in contrast to those sacrifices in the Temple and he redrew the boundaries of holiness in a different way to those who had acknowledged religious authority. Thus, not only did Jesus use the metaphor of his body to "speak of one thing in terms which are seen to be suggestive of another" (Soskice 1985: 49) or to understand "one kind of thing in terms of another" (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 5) but Jesus' embodiment of those tensions cannot be understood without reference to those dialectical relationships. In other words we cannot have the redefinition without first a definition and we cannot have Jesus without the Temple. They are a dialectical gestalt. However, was that gestalt extended into the organizational dynamics of the early Church? To explore this question I now turn to Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church, which contains two of the most important discussions about the body metaphor in the New Testament.

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<sup>40</sup> Although, according to Christopher Rowland it was the English Jesuit George Tyrrell who first said "that the nineteenth-century German quest for the historical Jesus resembled the situation where a man looked down a deep well and saw his own reflection in the bottom. The simple moral message of Jesus was not a first-century Jesus at all, but the pale reflection of the values and aspirations of a nineteenth-century liberal outlook." (Rowland 1985: 123)

<sup>41</sup> Or, in the words of Walter Brueggemann, we have to admit that "all claims of reality ... are under negotiation." (Brueggemann 1993: 17)

## 4.3 Paul & The Body

### 4.3.1 Introduction

James Dunn is one of a number of New Testament historians who has identified some important common ground between Jesus and Paul:

What Paul had done, however, was to extend Jesus' attack on the internal boundaries being drawn within Judaism to the external boundaries drawn round Judaism. Jesus had objected to the Pharisaic (and others') belief that non-sectarians were 'sinners', excluded by God from covenant grace because they were outside the boundaries of their particular faction. In just the same way, Paul objected to the typically Jewish idea that the Gentiles were 'sinner' by definition, excluded by God from covenant grace. (Dunn 1991: 138-9)

In this religious context the boundary markers of Judaism were intimately linked to the physical body (particularly the male body) through the rite of circumcision and through the importance of the food laws. However, if Paul's relationship with his fellow Jews was a matter of some controversy so was his relationship with a number of his fellow Christians. Paul began as a persecutor to Christianity but, even after his conversion, was marginal to those who held authority in the nascent Christian community. His position was always problematic, as Hans Küng has stated:

Paul was controversial from the beginning. His case disturbed the young Christian community more than any comparable one. For here a man had appeared who was not a direct disciple of Jesus, who knew Jesus at best by hearsay, and yet who claimed – on the basis of a quite personal and therefore unverifiable call – to be an apostle of Jesus Christ. (Küng 1994: 17)

The correspondence we know as his First Letter to the Corinthians is important for a number of reasons. First, it has universally agreed Pauline authorship unlike some of the other epistles (Colossians, Ephesians, I & II Timothy, Titus) where this matter is disputed. Second, it seems most likely that the church at Corinth was founded by

Paul (1 Corinthians 1: 14-16, 2:1-5; 2 Corinthians 11: 9, 12: 12). This is helpful in terms of later discussion regarding authority, since Paul is not having to justify his authority to a church founded by somebody else. Third, I Corinthians can be dated fairly precisely to the mid 50s CE (Kümmel 1966; Thrall 1965: 11; Barrett 1968: 8; Bornkamm 1974: 94; Robinson 1976: 54; Holladay 1993: 135). This means it was written about 20 years after Jesus' crucifixion and provides very early evidence for the nature of the Church. Fourth, it includes more references to  $\sigma\tau\mu\alpha$  (body) than any other New Testament work<sup>42</sup> – and includes Paul's account of the Last Supper (11: 23-25) plus an important example of Paul's use of the body metaphor for the organizational nature of the Church (12: 12-31). I shall examine those two passages in more detail, after having sketched the wider social background to Paul's letter. Finally, Paul's Corinthian correspondence has been recognized as having important implications for questions of authority and power in the Church (Shaw 1983: 62-100; Sykes 1984: 53-61, 1995: 148-50, 164-65 c.f. R. H. Roberts 1989: 193-95; Avis 1992: 125-26). I shall be addressing some of these issues in the following section (4.3.2) and at a later stage in this study (Section 5).

#### 4.3.2 The Body of Christ in 1 Corinthians

Paul probably founded the church in Corinth around 50 AD and it would have been a relatively small group, with perhaps less than 50 members (Ford 1989: 230). It has been described as a "sociological beargarden" (Brown 1988: 52) and it appears that most of the issues dealt with in Paul's correspondence concern self-identity of the group. Various ideas have been proposed to explain the situation behind this letter. Some commentators have suggested that the divisions in the church, referred to by Paul, were due to conflict with those who had a more traditionally Jewish understanding of the gospel, more particularly the apostle Peter, (Hurd 1983 [1965]; Elliot 1982). Others have argued that the problem was a more radical cluster of people informed by gnostic systems of thought (Bultmann 1952, 1955; Schmithals 1971), while Richard A. Horsley contends it was group influenced by the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher Philo (Horsley 1978, 1980). However, in my view, attempts to locate the issues Paul is addressing in an entirely theological conflict remain unconvincing whereas a socio-economic context has much to commend it.

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<sup>42</sup> I am grateful to Sarah Sheppard for this observation.

Gerd Theissen draws attention to the passage in 1 Corinthians 1: 26-29 where Paul specifically mentions the social composition of the Corinthian Church.<sup>43</sup> Although the passage might appear at first sight to confirm the sort of romantic notion of proletarian Christianity, held for instance by Engels, it actually indicates that the early Christian community was a socially mixed group because although not many were wise, powerful and of noble birth some, by implication, were. It is this latter group of people who most probably exercised greatest influence in the church and with whom Paul comes into conflict over the retention of their civic prestige. John Chow (Chow 1992) has extended this thesis and believes that patronage-client relationships would have formed a widespread part of the social fabric of Corinth and were modelled on contemporary Imperial culture. The implications of this phenomenon were extensive, not least, in terms of human association with forms of deity:

it seems that the values and structure of the patronal society were also reflected in institutions, such as associations and households. In such contexts it is of particular interest to note that patronal relations can be seen as projected beyond the realm of human relations into that of human-divine relations. (Chow 1992: 82)

For the church in Corinth this proved to be a major source of conflict as the radically redefined religion-without-boundaries, which had been expounded by Jesus within the context of the Jewish faith, was extended by Paul to an incredibly hierarchical and stratified Gentile world. Theissen uses a category from Ernst Troeltsch (1931: 81ff) to explain how Paul resolved this tension. According to Theissen, Paul advocated a form of 'love-patriarchalism' which:

Takes social differences for granted but ameliorates them through an obligation of respect and love, an obligation imposed on those who are socially stronger. (Theissen 1982: 107)

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<sup>43</sup> "For consider your call, brethren; not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth; but God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world ..." (1 Cor 1: 26-29 cf Theissen 1982: 70-73).

Troeltsch, Theissen and Chow all believe that this ideological stance had a major, long-term impact not only upon the Church but also upon western society as a whole. First, Paul's metaphor of the body of Christ in which everyone is equal and to which everyone makes a contribution subverted the oppressive patron-client relationships of that period (Chow 1992: 187). Second, this simultaneous affirmation of social equality and social differences was later extended by Constantine beyond the Christian minority in his dominion and used by him to steer his empire through a period of great social change (Theissen 1982: 109). Third, it provided the basis for a Christian acceptance of a State which, while being pagan, was at the same time sanctioned by God (Troeltsch 1931: 80, Grant 1977: 36ff). However, commentators are sharply divided on the ideological role that the body metaphor played in Paul's thinking. For instance, Dale B Martin has recently argued that: "The goal of upper-class ideology was not utter consistency but the maintenance of the hierarchical structure of society, the power of the ruling class and its control over the human body. In terms of that goal, apparently, its ideology of the body was eminently successful." (Martin 1995: 25-6) Furthermore, he believes that: "A critical stance vis-à-vis the sexism of traditional Christianity might better begin with a frank confession of the sexism reflected in biblical texts rather than attempting to reread those texts to de-emphasize the sexism." (Martin 1995: 296 n 15). Although Luise Schottroff agrees that the metaphor of the body was used by various pre-Pauline patricians to justify oppression in "the interests of the state". She states that in Paul's use of the image in 1 Corinthians: "I do not see in 1 Corinthians 12 the patriarchal legitimization of oppression by means of the image of the one body and its members; what I do see is the use of that image to critique domination, in the interests of just relationships within the communities." (Schottroff 1995: 32-33)<sup>44</sup> It is against this background of

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<sup>44</sup> John O'Neill has caught the deep social ambiguity of the metaphor: "The body politic certainly emerges from a long allegorical history of the desire for the representation of unity and difference in a just society. It contains both a myth and a metaphysic which has been appended throughout the history of social and political conflict both for revolutionary and restorational purposes. It is a transgressive figure when opposed to caste interpretations of social division of labour, as well as a figure of difference and charismatic justice when opposed to the forces of rationalization and homogenization ... it is a transgressive figure because of its power to integrate what has been separated and to differentiate what has been homogenized. The body politic is a civilizational concept, to use the language of Frye,

social conflict and hierarchical consensus that I now turn specifically to Paul's use of the metaphor of Christ's body in two specific passages from 1 Corinthians.

A) The Last Supper (1 Corinthians 11: 17-34)

I have already considered the importance of table-fellowship in Jesus' ministry and others have noted the significance of ritual sharing of food for the early Church.<sup>45</sup> In this respect 1 Corinthians is a good example because controversy arises on two fronts, first in chapter 8 with a discussion about eating food offered to idols then in chapter 11 with some teaching specifically about the Last Supper and the Body of Christ. It is clear from 11: 17-34 that the eucharistic meal was not an expression of unity for the Corinthian church.<sup>46</sup> Why should this be so? Various ideas have been canvassed at different times, for instance: (i) this situation arose because the Lord's Supper had been allowed to become an ordinary meal; (ii) Paul's words illustrate the presence of gnostic tendencies in the congregation; (iii) some in the church were suspending the meal's obligatory nature. However, it is more likely that we have here an example of the difficulties already noted, where the social hierarchy of Corinthian culture clashed with the egalitarianism of early Christian table-fellowship. Gerd Theissen has pointed out that:

the Hellenistic congregations of early Christianity, as we find them in Corinth and Rome, display a marked internal stratification. (Theissen 1982: 146)

Theissen believes there is good evidence for thinking that the hierarchical divisions of Greek and Roman society provide the most likely context for much of Paul's advice about the conflict in the Corinthian church (Theissen 1982) and he has been followed by several other New Testament historians (Chow 1992; Meeks 1993; Hultgren 1994; Joubert 1995). Thus, the divisions present in the celebration of the eucharist by the Corinthian church reflect the divisions of wealth and patronage which existed in the

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and it functions on the highest level of allegory to transfigure society in terms of the human body itself, imaginatively conceived as the universe of human potentiality." (O'Neill 1995: 126)

<sup>45</sup> "The eucharistic meal was the most tangible expression of the unity in Jesus Christ of Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female which [Paul] valued so highly." (Esler 1994: 53)

<sup>46</sup> "I am told that when you meet as a congregation you fall into sharply divided groups ... each of you takes their own supper, one goes hungry and another has too much to drink." (1 Cor 11: 18, 21)

wider society. In this respect, Wayne A Meeks draws attention to the younger Pliny's condemnation of the common practice of hosting a dinner at which those of his social level recline at one table with fine wine and elegant cuisine while the freedmen are sat separately with basic food and poor wine (Meeks 1993: 96). Theissen concludes:

It can be assumed that the conflict over the Lord's Supper is a conflict between rich and poor Christians. The cause of this conflict was a particular habit of the rich. They took part in the congregational meal which they themselves had made possible, but they did so by themselves – possibly physically separated from the others at their own table. (Theissen 1982: 151)<sup>47</sup>

If these commentators are correct in locating the source of this conflict in the social divisions between rich and poor, the question which naturally follows is: How did Paul respond to such a situation? Again a number of possibilities have been expounded. Is Paul's organizational discourse and use of metaphors designed to: (a) mitigate the plight of the weak (Theissen 1982; Chow 1992; Meeks 1993); (b) critique and transform the existing situation (Schottroff 1995; Fiorenza 1994 [1983]); (c), reflect different cultural perceptions about the body (Martin 1995); or (d) merely to mask Paul's own role as religious broker and patron (Joubert 1995)? According to David Ford (Ford 1989) an essential part of Paul's Corinthian correspondence in both letters is the question of authority and it is significant that in I Corinthians 11 we have one of Paul's few direct references to Jesus' own teaching. Werner Jeanrond has placed the question of authority at the heart of Christianity's emergence as a reform movement within Judaism<sup>48</sup> and a similar point has been made by Stephen Sykes who

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<sup>47</sup> John Chow believes that: "The eating of the Lord's supper became an occasion where the poor were humiliated by the rich" (Chow 1992: 183) although Don Cupitt sees this problem as endemic to certain types of religion: "In the monotheistic faiths the religious community has always been a power structure and has always been in some measure coercive." (Cupitt 1989: 1)

<sup>48</sup> "The problem of authority as a theological problem lies at the centre of the Church's beginning as a reform movement emerging from within Judaism. The traditional authorities in Pharisaic Judaism, such as law, temple, land and family, were re-assessed and relativised by Jesus and his disciples as a result of their particular experience and understanding of God's presence in this world." (Jeanrond 1989: 81).



argues that questions of diversity, conflict and authority lie at the heart of the Christian faith.<sup>49</sup> This has clear links with the type of questions that theologians and historians such as Martin, Joubert and Shaw are asking about Paul's structuring of his discourse and directly raises the issue of the relationship between authority and power in the Church. However, my own reading will follow similar lines to those proposed by Schottroff and Fiorenza.

One of the issues which 1 Corinthians raises in a very sharp way is the place of power and authority in the Church (e.g. Theissen 1982, Shaw 1983, Mitchell 1991, Chow 1992, Martin 1995). This will be discussed further in Section 5 but it may be helpful at to make some preliminary observations about where power is located in the context of this exploration of Paul and the early Church. Within the context of movements and organizations, 'power' and 'authority' can be seen as incredibly diverse and wide ranging concepts. On the one hand there are relatively straightforward definitions, for example that of Iain L. Mangham's:

Power always has about it an element of coercion. It may be seen as a process by which one individual (or group) extracts compliance from another individual (or group) despite a conflict of interests or intentions, through the control or proposed manipulation of resources/commodities which the other individual (or group) values. (Mangham 1986: 67)

From which he goes onto to argue that the sources of power are basically two-fold – positional and personal – although he acknowledges that is possible to make finer distinctions than this basic approach. Other writers on organizations have 'fine-tuned' their definitions of power to an ever greater degree. Instances of this are Pfeffer's three sources of power: (i) control of organizational resources (e.g. budgets and positions), (ii) control or extensive access to information, (iii) formal authority (Pfeffer 1992); or Handy's division of power into four categories: (i) resource power,

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<sup>49</sup> "The history of the earliest stages of the Christian movement demonstrates that conflicts about the identity of Christianity are not incidental or peripheral, but that they are inseparable from the actual form and content of that movement's origins." (Sykes 1984: 26)

(ii) position power, (iii) expert power, (iv) personal power (Handy 1988);<sup>50</sup> Torbert's (Torbert 1991) five point analysis of the philosophical basis undergirding different approaches to power: (i) unilateral power – based on the Hobbesian idea that "might is right"; (ii) diplomatic power – rests on Rousseau's discussion about legitimate power being founded on consent; (iii) logistical power – develops from Kantian thinking on the rationality of human behaviour and sees power as arising from our critical and reflective processes; (iv) integrated power – combines these three forms of power with notions of justice drawing especially on John Rawls' (Rawls 1971) ideas in this field and the area of human development; (v) transforming power – takes the interplay of power and developmental psychology further and Torbert argues that this form of power seeks out challenge and contradiction to bring about change in individuals and organizations. (Torbert 1991: 57f) A very comprehensive categorisation has been provided by Gareth Morgan who lists fourteen specific sources of power within organizations.<sup>51</sup><sup>20</sup> A related issue is whether there is any difference between power and authority. The intimate connection between the two is illustrated by Sims, Fineman and Gabriel who define authority as:

A concept generally identified with legitimate power, or an unequal relationship in which the right of the superior party to order others is recognized by the subordinate as legitimate. (Sims, Fineman & Gabriel 1993: 231)

The notion of authority as legitimate power is helpful at one level, yet at another it only pushes the question on a stage to: who legitimates power? If these words are ambiguous in organizational discourse the same is true in theology and church

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<sup>50</sup> cf Reed's discussion of four types of power in the context of churches: (i) personal qualities or skills; (ii) possession of objects; (iii) that which is conferred by others' respect or dependence; (iv) that which a person can seize through office. (Reed 1978)

<sup>51</sup> i) Formal authority; (ii) Control of scarce resources; (iii) Use of organizational structure, rules and regulations; (iv) Control of decision processes; (v) Control of knowledge and information; (vi) Control of boundaries; (vii) Ability to cope with uncertainty; (viii) Control of technology; (ix) Interpersonal alliances, networks and control of "informal organization"; (x) Control of counterorganizations; (xi) Symbolism and management of meaning; (xii) Gender and management of gender relations; (xiii) Structural factors that define the stage of action; (xiv) The power one already has. (G Morgan 1986)

history. Significantly, the theologian David Ford has located a discussion of authority in his analysis of I & II Corinthians, arguing that Paul has set out five principles for the exercising of power within Christian communities. Authority must:

- 1) appeal to God and the Gospel
- 2) embody the ambiguities of the group
- 3) be persuasive and distributed
- 4) be vulnerable and related to the cross
- 5) be eschatological (ie await vindication)

(Ford 1989: 252-53)

The key point here is Ford's second principle – that Paul works with a concept of embodied authority. Furthermore, embodied authority is a contextual authority and, I would argue, only has sensemaking value when it is considered in such a framework. In my view this approach is supported by Gerd Theissen's discussion of 1 Corinthians 1: 12 where Paul writes:

What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ."

Historians have long puzzled over why some people were saying "I follow Christ" in a group where, presumably, everyone at least thought they did as well. Theissen (1982: 67) argues that this was the slogan of some itinerant Christian missionaries who traced their teaching and authority directly back to Christ in, what might appear to be, an early form of apostolic succession. However, Theissen believes that Paul gives precedence to the community of faith in that the apostles belong to the community and the community belongs directly to Christ. So, rather than: Christ⇒Apostles⇒Community. Paul is teaching: Christ⇒Community⇒Apostles. If the community does have priority over the apostles then this has important implications for any understanding of "Apostolic Succession" and where authority lies in the Church. On this reading of Paul authority is first 'embodied' in Christ's sacrificial body, then it is 'embodied' in the Body of Christ (the Church) and finally it is 'embodied' in the lives of those who share in the symbol of the body (the eucharist).

Paul then proceeds to elaborate his embodied vision of the Church by discussing the unity and diversity of the body's members.

#### B) The Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12: 12-31)

If Paul's discussion in 1 Corinthians 11 about the eucharist and Jesus' words at the Last Supper provide the basis for the body as a key organizational metaphor for the Church, then Paul's development of the same metaphor ('the body of Christ') in chapter 12 of his letter raises a further set of issues – specifically, is this an image of unity or diversity?

Christ is like a single body with its many limbs and organs, which, many as they are, together make up one body; for in one Spirit we were all brought into one body by baptism, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free; we were all given one Spirit to drink. (I Cor 12: 12-13)

Historians and theologians differ markedly in whether they understand Paul to be using this image and the eucharistic meal as a sign of unity or diversity. There are those who place the accent on the body as a metaphor for unity (Robinson 1952; Schnackenburg 1974 [1965]; Sanders 1977; Wiles 1979; Rowland 1985; Hamerton-Kelly 1992; Gillespie 1994) while others stress the diversity (Richardson 1958; Moltmann 1977; Sykes 1984; McFague 1993; Hodgson 1994; Watson 1994) a third group focus on the contingency of such embodiment (MacKinnon 1979; Loughlin 1996; Stamps 1996).

#### ❖ Body & Unity

John Robinson believes that the crucifixion of Jesus' body forms the "lynch-pin" of Paul's understanding of Christianity and the Church (Robinson 1952: 48) and since the Church is now "the resurrection body of Christ" (Robinson 1952: 51) the underlying concept is that the Church's "unity is that of a single physical entity" (Robinson 1952: 51). By comparison, in Rudolf Schnackenburg's discussion of people of God and body of Christ as organizational metaphors, he stresses the elements of unity and bonding within the images. Thus, they both "express the inner bond of the New Testament People of God with Christ" and the "union of its members through Christ" (Schnackenburg 1974 [1965]: 165f). Alternatively, Christopher

Rowland acknowledges that each person will have his or her own contribution to make but it is the Spirit which brings about "unity and breaks down divisions" (Rowland 1985: 209). Hamerton-Kelly argues that Paul uses the sacrificial imagery of the eucharist to "preach unity" (Hamerton-Kelly 1992: 86) and Sanders also forges a strong link between the Paul's teaching on the Lord's Supper and his language in I Cor 12: 12f (Sanders 1977: 456). Maurice Wiles underlines that in the Patristic era church unity found its basis in the bishops and the eucharist (Wiles 1979: 91-103), and Thomas Gillespie commenting on I Cor 12: 12 writes:

here Paul uses synecdoche (part for the whole or whole for the part) to designate the church ... The burden of the theme is to show that the unity of the church is not compromised by the diversity of the Spirit's work within the one body. (Gillespie 1994: 118-19)

#### ❖ Body & Diversity

Alan Richardson's perspective is to stress that Christ is the one who includes the many and sees the image in terms of "corporate personality" (Richardson 1958: 254ff) whereas Moltmann takes the openness of Jesus' table-fellowship and applies it on a cosmic scale. Thus, a theological understanding of time will take its "bearings from the Lord's Supper" and the diversity of all time is perceived in the light of the body and blood of Christ (Moltmann 1977: 243f). Stephen Sykes argues that within a Christian context: "Unity has only ever meant the containment of diversity within bounds" (Sykes 1984: 285) and that this transformation of individualism is achieved through participation in baptism and the Lord's Supper (Sykes 1984: 62). Francis Watson takes up some of the ideas about embodied authority in outlining his understanding of Paul's image of the Body of Christ, in that:

the allocation of varying gifts and roles by the same Spirit establishes a formal equality – no-one is any more or less a member of the body than anyone else – within a diversity of roles which allows for hierarchical

elements so long as these are strictly reciprocal rather than monological terms. (Watson 1994: 112)<sup>52</sup>

In addition, Sallie McFague and Peter Hodgson make similar points in using the 'body' metaphor to make a wider identification between God and the universe (McFague 1993) or Christ and the world (Hodgson 1994).

### ❖ Body & Contingency

Donald Mackinnon argues that Jesus' action of breaking bread with the stranger and the outcast actualises the love of God, which is also the dialectical reality of the human/divine relationship (MacKinnon 1979: 179f). However, a vital part of this parabolic communication is that it remains unfinished and incomplete:

Once that incompleteness is forgotten then the force of parable as indirect indication of the transcendent is gone. If eucharistic worship is a strangely dangerous reality, it is so because when effort is made to reckon with its many dimensions we are compelled to see that if it is the place of understanding, it is also the place where misunderstandings of many sorts may assume an obstinate permanence in the life of the spirit. (Mackinnon 1979: 181)<sup>53</sup>

The idea of the ongoing work of the eucharist and the body is also found in Loughlin's ideas about the Church as "a community in which people learn to embody the story of Jesus Christ" (Loughlin 1996: 86 – my italics). He outlines his perspective as one which:

seeks to understand the Christian life according to certain tropes – as the reading, consuming and embodying of the Word in the word of Scripture

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<sup>52</sup> and he goes on to warn against emphasising the unity of the Church at the expense of the Pauline sense of community (Watson 1994: 244).

<sup>53</sup> Interestingly Robinson also draws attention to the incomplete nature of the body image when he talks of: "This process by which the Church is gradually embodying the Divine fullness of Christ is further set by Paul within the total scheme of God's redemption" (Robinson 1952: 71 – my italics). In other words, this movement is both ongoing and incomplete.

in order to be read, consumed and embodied in the life of Christ.  
(Loughlin 1996: 88)

This ongoing and incomplete nature of the body metaphor is also caught by Dennis L. Stamps who contends that Paul's reflections in this area are "always situationally contingent" and that "the church Paul worked with was a church full of problems and very much in process" (Stamps 1996: 139).

#### ❖ Body & Dialectic

Others have seen the dynamics of unity and diversity in terms of a dialectic so, for example, James Dunn has argued that Paul's use of this metaphor is determinative for his whole understanding of ministry within the Church. Thus:

The body metaphor is and remains the classic illustration of unity in diversity, that is, a unity which does not emerge out of a regimented conformity, but a unity which results from a harmony of many different parts working together, and which depends on the diversity functioning as such. (Dunn 1977: 110-11)

The idea of this image functioning as a dialectic between unity and diversity has been explored in different ways by Arland Hultgren and Gerd Theissen. Hultgren argues that by using such a model Paul was deliberately giving out a "double message" (Hultgren 1994: 47). In 1 Corinthians he is exhorting the body to care for the individual whereas in Romans (Rom 12: 4-8) he uses the same metaphor to urge the individual to care for the body. A different perspective is provided by Theissen who sees the Church as a compromise between the need for institutions and the demands of freedom. He believes that the symbol of the body in Christianity and other modes of thought is fundamental for describing human relationality (Theissen 1984: 143) but that the Church itself is a paradoxical organization:

It is a plannable institution which aims at offering opportunities for an unplannable event that escapes all institutionalizing: the event of the Holy Spirit who blows where he wills. (Theissen 1984: 149)

I would argue that the paradoxical relationality of the Church in terms of institution and freedom can be given dynamic form through the paradoxical image of the body – one and many.<sup>54</sup>

#### 1.4.3 A Summary of Paul & The Body

I have argued that Paul's use of the body metaphor is part of a complex matrix of social, theological and organizational factors. Within the early Church the body was already an important part of the debate about the relationship between Judaism and emerging Christianity. This was because of the symbolic role that Jesus' body had in the final days of his life and the importance of people's bodies in maintaining the boundaries between Jewish and Gentile faith communities. Paul clearly saw the Eucharist as a meal which would reflect the unity of the Corinthian church but the symbolic rite had become a focus for conflict, since it continued to reflect the social divisions of Corinthian society. In turn, this raised important questions of power and authority for the group. While some historians have seen Paul exercising a form of unconcealed power-brokering in this situation, others have seen in his use of the imagery of the body an attempt to either transform the patron/client structures of the time or to embody the ambiguities of the church. Consequently, there is considerable interpretative diversity regarding Paul's use of the body metaphor for social organization and it has been seen as stressing: (i) unity, (ii) diversity, (iii) contingency, (iv) dialectic. Therefore, even if Paul did not intend this to happen, his theology and writing about the pastoral situations in the Corinthian church have left us 'open' and 'closed' metaphors for the body in the contemporary Church. On the one hand, as a metaphor for unity, the body tends to be closed against those who are outside it, while as a metaphor for diversity, contingency or dialectic, the body is more open.

## 4.4 Embodied Dialectic

Let me conclude this section on the framing of context through historical narrative, by relating this process to my earlier discussion on organizational sensemaking and how

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<sup>54</sup> Similar ideas are found in the Church of England Report *Believing in the Church*: "The spirit creates unity not uniformity." (BITC 1981: 233).



narrative interacts with hermeneutics of 'self' and 'other'. In her philosophical critique of postmodernism Gillian Rose recounts a story told by Martin Buber and others about the progressive loss of tradition:

When the great Israel Baal Shem Tov saw misfortune threatening the Jews, it was his custom to go into a certain part of the forest to meditate. There he would light a fire, say a special prayer, and the miracle would be accomplished and the misfortune averted. Later, when his disciple, the celebrated Maggid of Mezeritch, had occasion, for the same reason, to interceded with heaven, he would go the same place in the forest and say: 'Master of the Universe, listen! I do not know how to light the fire, but I am still able to say the prayer.' And again the miracle would be accomplished. Still later, Moshe-Leib of Sassov, in order to save his people once more, would go into the forest and say: 'I do not know the prayer, but I know the place and this must be sufficient.' It was sufficient and the miracle was accomplished. Then it fell to Israel of Rizhin to overcome misfortune. Sitting in his armchair, his head in his hands, he spoke to God: 'I am unable to light the fire and I do not know the prayer; I cannot even find the place in the forest. All I can do is tell the story, and this must be sufficient.' And it was sufficient. (Rose 1996: 99)

This she believes is an age-old prophetic trope and that being unable "to tell the tale of the tale" is the ultimate catastrophe of meaning for a society or a culture. To "survive or to live again demands a new tale to be told, a new prayer to be found and a new polity to be founded." For Rose, this process of discovery involves "the risk of coming to discover the self-relation of the other as the challenge of one's own self-relation" (Rose 1996: 100). This is the pattern of the Christ gestalt which I have explored throughout this thesis, in conversation with Paul Ricoeur, Mark Johnson and others. Essentially, I have argued, that the embodied self can only be known through the embodied other and then sought to apply this hermeneutic of self to my organizational hermeneutic of the Church. In other words, a communal or individual body with its biographic, relational, reflexive, dialectic and contingent character can only know itself in relation to another communal or individual body with its own biographic, relational, reflexive, dialectic and contingent character. Thus for Jesus the

'other' was the structure of the Jerusalem Temple; for Paul the 'other' was the structure of Hellenistic society; for Christ Church the embodied other was Walcot parish and for the Chaplaincy it was the Christian Union. Crucially, if these embodied 'others' did not exist, some other 'others' would have to provide the means for self-definition.

The complicating factor in this scenario of mutual recognition, as Rose correctly points out, is our 'participation in power'. In this respect, the body is a key organizational metaphor, certainly in the Church. Sarah Beckwith, in her study on the use of the body metaphor in the Middle Ages has argued that this potent image was "a site of conflict where the clerical and the lay meet and fight it out" (Beckwith 1993: 32). In a contemporary context Bryan S. Turner has made a similar point: "there is considerable consensus around the view that the body is central to discourses of power, especially to those medical and religious traditions which represent the body as a metaphor of social (especially gender) relationships" (Turner 1997: 38). Therefore a narrative about the body is a narrative about power and authority; and often stories about power and authority are stories about the drawing of social (and religious) boundaries. This has been a recurring motif in my research. In my re-telling of the story of Jesus of Nazareth, in the process of defining 'self' and 'other' he re-defined the existing boundaries of his society. In my re-telling of the story of Paul's Corinthian correspondence, Paul was re-drawing the accepted boundaries of Hellenistic society. In my recounting of Christ Church's history, they are a group which challenges the existing boundaries of the Church of England, as do higher education chaplaincies. This means that they are always grappling with issues of legitimacy and authority within their organizational contexts and in the final section of this thesis I shall explore a way in which these embodied narratives of power and authority might be handled creatively and positively.



## Section 5:

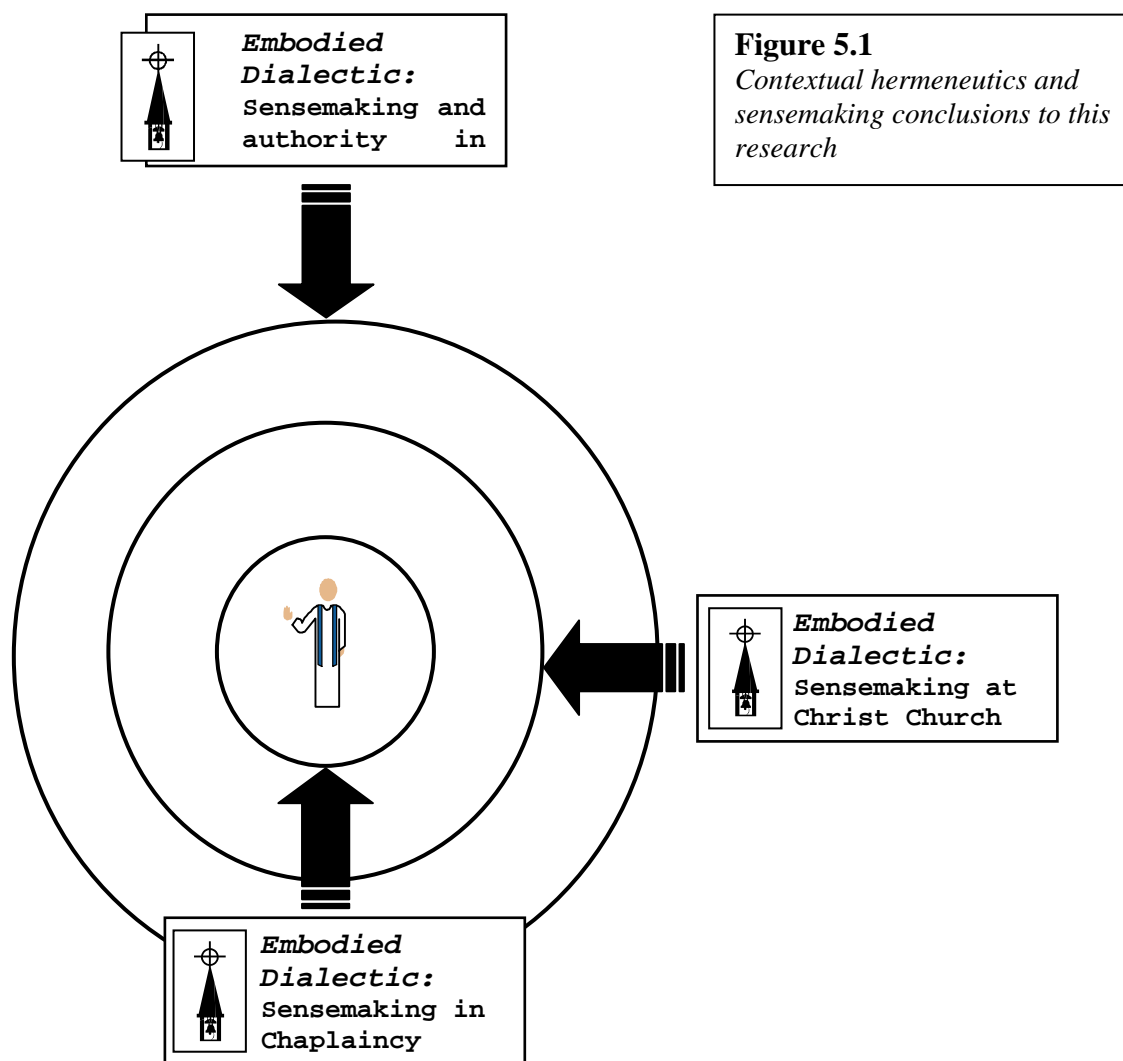
### Conversations about the Church as an Embodied Organization

*There is no glue, there is no mortar subtle,  
solid enough for here: only the stained air blowing  
up from the brewery through the lean dry gaps;  
hard to know how an eye once saw the consonance,  
the fit of these unsocial shapes, once saw  
each one pressed to the other's frontier, every one  
inside the other's edge, and conjured the dry aliens  
to run, one sentence, scrawled across the sheet,  
subtle against the wind, a silent spell, a plot.*

From "Drystone" by Rowan Williams (Williams 1994: 9)

## 5.1 Introduction

Rowan Williams's poem about dry stone walls provides the metaphorical introduction to this section on the wider questions about the nature of authority in the Church. Williams speaks of "these unsocial shapes" for which "There is no glue, there is no mortar subtle enough for here". There is a sense in which this thesis has been about many unsocial shapes, including the Chaplaincy Centre and Christ Church. They do not fit comfortably into the organizational structures of the Church of England. They are awkward and challenging to have around. Furthermore they bring the issue of organizational "mortar" into sharp relief – what is it that holds the wall together? Is there something which approximates to cement, some adhesive which brings cohesion? Or is the Church merely a collection of stones located together to provide shelter against the elements? One of the implied questions behind this metaphor is: where does authority lie within the organization? This section will explore some of the wider implications of my embodied approach to sensemaking.



I shall follow the same pattern that I adopted for my epistemology in Section 1, that is of discussing the wider contextual hermeneutic circle before focussing on my most immediate concerns. Thus, the first part of this section (5.2) will explore some of the conversations about embodiment and dialectic I have had in this respect – particularly with Emery Roe (Roe 1994); Stephen W. Sykes (1978, 1984, 1987, 1995); Stephen D. Moore (1996) and Richard H. Roberts (1989, 1996, 1997a, 1997b). I will then proceed in the second part (5.3) to consider how my five-fold organizational understanding of the body metaphor elaborated in Section 1 (1.5.2) subsequently effected my sensemaking constructions in terms of the Chaplaincy Centre at the University of Bath (5.3.2) and Christ Church, Bath (5.3.3). This schema is represented in **Figure 5.1** using my diagram of contextual hermeneutic circles for an embodied, contextual cogito.

## 5.2 Embodiment & Authority in the Church

### 5.2.1 Introduction:

In his major work on the relationship between social theory and theology John Milbank has asserted that history is "distilled from the complex strategies of power" (Milbank 1990: 279) and asks: "whether there can be a narrative that is not 'about' power?" (Milbank 1990: 263). This final section is explicitly a narrative about power within the Church but from an organizational rather than a theological perspective. I shall be drawing upon the work of policy analyst Emery Roe (Roe 1994) to examine two conflicting accounts of power within the Church of England and why they differ so sharply. In a bold approach to dissension and disagreement within organizational and social conflicts, Roe argues that polarities and dialectical relationships are an innate part of such situations and can only be 'resolved' in what he calls intertexts or metanarratives.<sup>1</sup> His narrative approach to policy analysis utilises a four-fold methodology:

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<sup>1</sup> Roe distinguishes between his small-m metanarratives and large scale Metanarratives so often criticised within postmodernism. However it is worth noting the connection that John O'Neill makes between local community and grand stories: "The claim that there are no longer any grand stories capable of underwriting common sense ... gives comfort only to those who lack community at any level of society other than intellectual fashion." (O'Neill 1995: 198)

- **stories** – have beginnings, middles and ends (or premises and conclusions, if the stories are in the form of scenarios) and are taken by one or more of the parties to a controversy as underwriting the assumptions to the disagreement.
- **nonstories** – do not conform to the dominant story, have a different structure and effect. Roe argues that bureaucratic critiques and circular arguments are often cast in a story format but since, strictly speaking, they have no beginning or end they are incomplete stories or nonstories.
- **counterstories** – as the name suggests, these are narratives that run counter to the controversy's dominant narrative. According to Roe they are the most effective way of reframing an existing policy narrative.<sup>2</sup>
- **Metanarratives**– Roe contrasts his small-m understanding of metanarratives with Lyotard's critique of large-M Metanarratives: "Small-m metanarratives are those policy narratives in a controversy that embrace, however temporarily, the major oppositions in a controversy ... a metanarrative is not 'consensus' or 'agreement,' but rather a 'different agenda,' which allows us to move on issues that were dead in the water on their older agendas." (Roe 1994: 52)

Roe's definition of metanarratives illustrates the importance of opposites or polarities in his line of thinking. He argues that the characteristics of controversy must remain essential parts of the narrative and there should be no expectation that they will be glossed over or eliminated:

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<sup>2</sup> See Grant & Osrick 1996: 13 for a similar dialectic of metaphor/counter-metaphor in organizations.

<sup>3</sup> Roe's notions of small-m metanarratives appear to share common ground with Gareth Jones' understanding of rhetoric and theology: "Rhetoric – which can include such tropes as metaphor and analogy, as well as others, and which consequently can operate in a metanarrative fashion – should be regarded as the way of understanding the role and scope of a doctrine within the ongoing process which one names a community's action of self- and social definition ... Doctrines are models; and models are nothing more than images of something real which somebody, somewhere, wishes to use to communicate a certain understanding of a certain idea or action. Theology is nothing more nor less than model-building, but always for specifically rhetorical purposes." (Jones 1995: 228, 230 cf Milbank's argument that narratives can only "out narrate" one another (Milbank 1990))

To undertake a narrative policy analysis is not merely to start with the uncertain, complex, and polarized. It is to legitimate and maintain that uncertainty, complexity, and polarization. This ratification goes well beyond the fact that the technical uncertainties underlying a controversy are not reduced: narrative policy analysis requires uncertainty, complexity, and polarization as a continued precondition for analysis. (Roe 1994: 17)

Roe is drawing on the work of the semiotician Michael Riffaterre whose notion of an intertext seems very close to Roe's understanding of a small-m metanarrative. Roe stresses that his proposal for an "intertextual evaluation" of a controversy does not search for consensus. Instead, it acknowledges any divisions or polarities between those involved. The aim of the intertext is to set out those divisions in a way that "makes their irreconcilability more useful for policy purposes" (Roe 1994: 144). In other words:

The idea behind intertextual evaluation (or, for that matter, any kind of narrative policy analysis) is not to find a way to get rid of the polarization driving the controversy, but rather to find a state of affairs whose very success depends on having that polarization in place. (Roe 1994: 145)<sup>3</sup>

This is in contrast to, for example, Charles Hampden-Turner whose understanding of organizations leads him to argue that a key leadership role in institutional culture is to ensure that:

conflicts are defused and eventually become complementary forces, mutually reinforcing the best aspects of culture rather than attacking them. (Hampden-Turner 1994: 224)

However in Roe's approach, he proposes that instead of searching for a metanarrative of reconciliation those involved in conflict should search for a metanarrative (or 'intertext') which allows for two policy narratives – each the polar opposite of the other – to exist the same time without necessarily 'resolving' them. Once the metanarrative has been generated and achieves a measure of agreement, it becomes

the focus for further dialectic and counterstories. Roe is surely correct in highlighting the inherent polarities at the base of many organizational conflicts and in rejecting spurious attempts to obscure organizational complexity. That complexity and diversity needs to be embraced and made part of the story because only then can it become a positive element in the metanarrative. If differences and polarities are not so affirmed and made part of a metanarrative then the danger is that they will be lost in an ongoing, circular nonstory which merely critiques a narrative without providing a further, viable story. Roe makes it clear that he perceives this process of social and organizational story-telling as inherently dialectical – for which he uses the metaphor of magnetic poles:

The starting point of narrative policy analysis is the reality of uncertainty and complexity in the polarized issues and controversies of today ... Polarization, along with issue uncertainty and complexity, are here to stay.  
(Roe 1994: 10, 146)<sup>4</sup>

I have found Roe's dialectical understanding of story helpful in analysing conflicting accounts of the role of power within the Church. This has been widely acknowledged as a neglected area of theological, organizational and pastoral concern. For example, Stephen Sykes noted in 1984 that little debate had taken place within the Church on the subject of 'power' and, when it was referred to, it was usually under the heading of 'authority': "It is part of the modern theological reluctance to have anything to do with power that the *unavoidable* questions concerning power have been discussed under the religiously more acceptable term authority" (Sykes 1984: 53-54 – my italics). A similar observation has been made at regular intervals since: "The hermeneutics of power within Christian theology is underdeveloped" (R. H. Roberts 1989: 163); "In ecclesiology, and perhaps to a lesser extent theology, power has been a neglected, even despised concept ... Embarrassment over the reality of power often leads to the concept being cloaked or misrepresented by associational rhetoric: 'authority',

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<sup>4</sup> Similarly Morgan draws attention to the dialectical character of metaphor in organizations: "A dialectical view of reality suggests that tension and contradiction will always be present ... The choice that individuals and societies ultimately have before them is thus really a choice about the kind of contradiction that is to shape the pattern of daily life." (G Morgan 1986: 266-67)



'Lordship' or 'headship' would be just some examples" (Percy 1995: 279).<sup>5</sup> However, there is an important 'story' and 'counterstory' in this field which usefully opens up this topic for the Church of England particularly, but also for other churches. The 'story' is provided by Stephen Sykes, an *ordained* theologian who has held chairs at Durham and Cambridge and is currently Bishop of Ely. The 'counterstory' is told by Richard H. Roberts, a *lay* theologian who was Professor of Divinity at St Andrews before taking up his current post as Professor of Religious Studies in the University of Lancaster. Both have written widely on the polity of the Church of England. As a counterpoint I shall provide an example of a possible 'nonstory' within the schema using Stephen Moore's trenchant critique of power within the worlds of the Church and New Testament studies (Moore 1996). One common feature between these three narratives of power and the Church is their use of the body as an organizational metaphor. I have examined elsewhere some of the different roles this image plays within the Church in terms of an embodied dialectic of conflict and consensus (V. S. Roberts 1999). Yet, as noted earlier, it is clear from Sarah Beckwith's study of the metaphor of Christ's body in the Middle Ages that this was "a highly contested area" (Beckwith 1993: 23) which became a focus for disagreement. It was "a site of conflict where the *clerical* and the *lay* meet and fight it out" (Beckwith 1993: 32 – my italics).

### 5.2.2 'Story': Stephen W. Sykes & Power in the Church

Stephen Sykes' early reflections on questions of power and authority are set out in *The Integrity of Anglicanism* (Sykes 1978) and *The Identity of Christianity* (Sykes 1984) and I shall begin with these works, as it is to this 'story' that Richard H Roberts writes his 'counterstory' in his lengthy paper "Lord, Bondsman and Churchman: Identity, Integrity and Power in Anglicanism" (R. H. Roberts 1989). Sykes contends that any analysis of the contemporary Church has to begin with an imaginative reconstruction of its origins in the New Testament. He is well aware of the problems raised by such an historical approach but argues there is no option: "the only practical choice is

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<sup>5</sup> Yet, it is worth noting, that this attitude is not necessarily confined to the Church of England. According to Rosabeth Kanter: "Power is America's last dirty word. It is easier to talk about money - and much easier to talk about sex – than it is to talk about power" (quoted in Pfeffer 1992: 13).

whether or not that reconstruction is, or is not, an informed one." (Sykes 1984: 13).<sup>6</sup> Significantly however, very few Church of England reports into the nature of its ministry attempt such an assessment (e.g. ACCUPA, ACORA, AGTE, WAOB) yet it is on the basis of such an imaginative reconstructions of the historical evidence that Sykes believes conflict is endemic to Christianity: "Conflict is the presupposed condition of the church of the New Testament ... [although] the sort of diversity of which the New Testament gives abundant evidence, and much of the conflict which lies in the background especially of the letters of Paul, requires nothing like the mechanisms to ensure total obedience which the church eventually devised for itself" (Sykes 1978: 89-90).<sup>7</sup>

Thus he believes that Christianity is, at its very heart, a "multifaceted" faith<sup>8</sup> but in turning from the origins of Christianity to the origins of the Church of England, Sykes argues that one of its founding Thirty Nine Articles (Article VI)<sup>9</sup> should also be read as an affirmation of diversity rather than the privileging of one form of authority over all others. For Sykes, Article VI does not mean that everything in scripture ought to be believed, but that which a "plain reader" cannot find for him or herself in the text should not then be asserted as an article of belief. This point takes on greater significance in the historical context of the Reformation practice of making the scriptures available to lay people in the vernacular. Consequently:

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<sup>6</sup> This echoes David Bosch's assertion quoted in 4.2 that: "It is the events at the origin of the Christian community – the "agenda" set by Jesus living, dying, and rising from the dead – that basically and primarily established the distinctiveness of that community" (Bosch 1991: 22) and Gerald Loughlin's comment that the story of Jesus is pivotal for Christianity: "For the Christian Church it has always been a life-story that comes first, against which all other things are to be matched." (Loughlin 1996: 23)

<sup>7</sup> Cf Katz & Kahn's comment on authority: "Authority is a conflict-reducing invention but its exercise implies submission to influence, which is almost never perfect. Organizational change is necessary for survival, but an organization with no internal resistance to change would be no organization at all." (Katz & Kahn 1978 [1966]: 617)

<sup>8</sup> The 'face' function as an embodied, dialectical metaphor for individuals and communities – see discussion of Janus, the two-faced Roman god of doorways, in both Torbert 1991 and Mellor & Shilling 1997 but note Moore's fascinating comments about Adam's *two* faces (Moore 1996: 90-91).

<sup>9</sup> Article VI: "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary for salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or thought requisite or necessary to salvation."

The possession by ordinary clergy and by the laity of the means of judgement in matters relating to the integrity of the faith and to the proper preaching of the gospel is crucial for the Anglican understanding of authority ... at the end of the day the people of God have the means of judging, independently if needs be, whether or not the truth is being upheld. (Sykes 1978: 91)

Two important outcomes for an Anglican understanding of authority in the Church follow from this. First, judgement about matters of faith is in the hands of the whole people and does not rest with a clerical elite. Second, the fact that this reading of scripture would often be in a liturgical context is also important. The reason for this, Sykes believes, is because the different elements of Anglican authority have become inextricably linked with worship and debates about one are automatically debates about the other. Thus, Sykes contends in a liturgical context, it is a basic tenet of Anglican belief that lay people are entitled to resist liturgical innovations. He draws one further conclusion germane to this study and that is, by affirming what he calls a dispersed pattern of authority, Sykes explicitly rejects the metaphor of the body and any idea of embodied authority:

Authority is not embodied, it is dispersed; and the reaching of authoritative decisions is a continuous process involving all the participators. (Sykes 1978: 99)

At this point, I would argue that Sykes' rejection of embodiment is based on a unitary understanding of the body metaphor and a failure to embrace an dialectical notion of embodiment – which is surprising given his dialectical perspective on Christianity as whole. Interestingly, Sykes does suggest a storied and embodied metaphor for authority when he argues that the Church and individuals within the organization should exercise their religious judgement in a similar fashion to the way in which a novelist develops a character through the circumstances of the story's plot.<sup>10</sup> In other

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<sup>10</sup> "to put some flesh on the bones one might add that this judgement is like the judgement a novelist has to exercise when he or she brings a character to a particular set of dramatic circumstances and must

words, the Church has to "act in character" but "what is in character may never have been done precisely like that before" (Sykes 1978: 98). Sykes pursues this theme of continuity and change in his later work on Christian identity (Sykes 1984), particularly through his use of the "essentially contested concept". He develops this idea within the context of his understanding of Christianity as a dialectical faith which emerges from the encounter between its inward and outward forms, which are also represented by a variety of metaphors – foundation and superstructure, spirit and body, centre and circumference, kernel and husk, sap and bark (Sykes 1984: 49-50, 235-38).<sup>11</sup> By inward forms Sykes means the "inner, spiritual reality of personal lives being transformed by God" (Sykes 1984: 231) while outer forms he defines as "the tradition which sees the identity of Christianity as lodged in certain external features" such as doctrines, myths, ethical teachings, rituals and social institutions (Sykes 1984: 231). This pattern is also reflected in Sykes' three-fold understanding of Christian identity. He argues that either: (i) there is a single authoritative version of the faith (the outward form); or (ii) there is a relativised and depotentiated version of Christianity which has no continuity of identity (the inward form); or (iii) there is the dialectical position which asserts that "the phenomenon of dispute within Christianity has certain conditions about it which make it dispute about one thing" (Sykes 1984: 251 – *my italics*). Thus, crucially, there is something about which to dispute.

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offer a plausible account of the character's response. It must be plausible in the sense that the character must act out of the resources which the novelist has created in earlier parts of the book and within the general limits of human psychology." (Sykes 1978: 97)

<sup>11</sup> Avis traces a more abstract dialectical pattern of: "tradition and criticism, tenacity and pluralism, orthodoxy and innovation, coherence and openness. All openness is heuristic; all closure is provisional. Without stability we cannot survive; without innovation we cannot progress" (Avis 1992: 94-95). However, compare Mintzberg's image of an integrated organization, embodied in the shape of a pentagon which balances the inward/outward dialectic of ideology and politics: "How do organizations counter the imploding effects of ideology and the exploding effects of politics? My belief is that these two catalytic forces in the centre of the pentagon must naturally counter each other. In fact, I suspect that another clue to the effective organization lies in maintaining a balance between these forces of cooperation and competition. They must form their own combination, must exist in a kind of dynamic tension." (Mintzberg 1989: 277-78 c.f. Mangham's use of a similar dialectic of competition and co-operation in the context of a theatrical organizational metaphor (Mangham 1978: 130-33)).

It is at this point he develops W B Gallie's notion of the "essentially contested concept" (Gallie 1964), which is:

a term which occurs again and again in the history of the discussion of a subject and yet is the subject of a chronic series of disputes. A historical understanding of the use of these terms is a necessary prerequisite for their philosophical clarification; yet they remain rooted in history in a way which explains the persistent resurgence of disputes about them. (Sykes 1984: 251)

The instances proposed by Gallie of such concepts are those of: science, fine arts, religion, justice and democracy; and there ought always to be dispute and conflict in these arenas. Gallie also outlines seven characteristics of an essentially contested concept:

- 1) the concept is appraisive in signifying some valued achievement
- 2) the achievement is of an internally complex character
- 3) the explanation of its worth refers to the parts of the whole
- 4) the achievement should be capable of modification under changed circumstances
- 5) each party should recognize that the concept is contested by others and participate defensively and aggressively
- 6) there should be an agreed exemplar from whom the concept is derived and whose authority is acknowledged
- 7) the contest should, in theory, enable optimal development of the achievement

Gallie and Sykes believe that the concept of Christianity meets these seven criteria, while acceding that the outcome of such an approach is not that of bringing conclusions from plain facts but the provision of a framework for discussing values and valued performances. In this context, Sykes contends that the achievement of Jesus of Nazareth provides an essentially contested concept within Christianity. This is illustrated by discussion on the doctrine of the incarnation although the "rules of the game" are not always agreed and some seem to be playing soccer whereas others are trying to play American football. To address this problem, Sykes returns to his dialectical view of Christianity which, he says, is:

necessarily a series of propositions, constituting an external expression in story, myth and doctrine. But this external expression is interrelated with the internal experience of new life inseparable from the story, myth and doctrine. One reason for the occurrence of internal conflict is the problem of the more precise delineation of boundaries. (Sykes 1984: 260-61)

However, instead of exploring this question of boundaries with one of his dialectical metaphors mentioned earlier – for example the embodied dialectic of body and spirit – Sykes develops the metaphor of the game and the agreed field of play. For him the agreed "field of play" for the essentially contested concept, together with the dialectic of inward and outward forms of faith, is the act (or acts) of worship. Interestingly, he points out that one of the important liturgical developments of the last two centuries has been the recovery of a "less didactic and necessarily more ambiguous form of eucharistic ministry". Furthermore, that recovery has taken place in an increasingly pluralist context – with diverse concepts of culture, Christianity and worship (Sykes 1984: 280). In addition, he argues that it is the worshipping community with its common symbolic forms of liturgy ("coherent family of liturgies" (Sykes 1984: 284)) which sets the limits on the range of theological diversity. In this respect, the field of play for the contest needs a common framework (canon law) which is set by one competent authority (the Christian community). At this juncture we seem to be in similar terrain mapped out by Ian S. Markham where he affirms the plurality of the public square and argues that society must take steps to encourage and nurture such diversity (Markham 1994). Sykes appears to affirm a Christian plurality based on two embodied metaphors – the eucharist (the body of Christ) and the worshipping community (the body of Christ). Consequently, although Sykes explicitly rejects an embodied notion of authority he does appear to be working with an implicit embodied dialectic which provides a template for his understanding of authority and power in the Church.

### 5.2.3 'Counterstory': Richard H. Roberts & Power in the Church

Having set out Stephen Sykes' 'story' of authority and power in the Church of England, I now turn to Richard Roberts' 'counterstory' in which he criticises Sykes' position under five headings:

- 1) The historical context of the contemporary Anglican problem of self-definition
- 2) Lordship and Bondage: Hegel's prefigurement of the sociology of knowledge and critical theory
- 3) Integrity: the quest for method
- 4) Identity: the assertion of essence
- 5) Power: the transvaluation of authority

In providing an historical context for his discussion, Roberts begins by drawing a direct link between an incarnational and, therefore, embodied theology and some similar issues of identity and boundaries outlined by Sykes:

A struggle for and assertion of theological identity on the part of the ordained ministry would appear to be contemporaneous with a loss of distinctive identity in the area of incarnational doctrine and the doctrine of the Church. (R. H. Roberts 1989: 160)

Roberts argues that there have been a number of factors which have combined to produce a particular search for self-understanding amongst what he calls the "professional class" of the Church (i.e. the clergy).<sup>12</sup> First, he cites a change of emphasis in doctrine of the incarnation (that is the embodiment of God in Christ) from a view which begins with Christ's divinity and works towards his humanity to one which starts with Jesus' humanity and moves towards his divinity. He believes this change, taken together with the process of secularisation and the growth of pluralism, has led to the transfer of some of the characteristics of 'high' Christology (starting with Jesus' divinity) to the clergy giving them increased power and authority.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Macdonald's sociology of the professions suggests there is more to professional influence than power: "a moment's reflection will bring the realization that if one thing is thought to characterize a profession, it is a code of ethics: professionals are people who act ethically and therefore questions of value are of the essence in professional practice. Furthermore, some professions are very much concerned with 'ought' questions. The clergy are the most obvious example, but lawyers are not far behind, for their work is also concerned with what is 'right'." (Macdonald 1995: 167)

<sup>13</sup> Cf Marcuse's assertion that the authority of the Roman Catholic hierarchy was transferred to the pater familias in Protestantism (referred to in Avis 1992: 32).

Second, he sees the process of understanding oneself as another as part of what he calls "a competitive economy of meaning" in which the ordained hierarchy has come "to conceive itself by means of an identity which, in asserting itself, correspondingly denied theological identity to the other, that is the laity" (R. H. Roberts 1989: 161). Roberts then elaborates his reading of the ecclesiological struggle for identity and the conflict of polarities in terms of Hegel's parable of the Lord and the Bondsman in which it is "through the extinction of the Other as a means to self-fulfilment that the Master attains to his exaltation" (R. H. Roberts 1989: 167). The correlate of this in theological terms is:

the situation of the unchallenged ordo, a priesthood that mediates, unchallenged, on behalf of others and in terms of which a laity must understand itself, that is as negated. (R. H. Roberts 1989: 167)

Roberts sets out his analysis of Sykes' two works *The Integrity of Anglicanism* and *The Identity of Christianity* under three headings: (i) "Integrity: the quest for method"; (ii) "Identity: the assertion of essence" and (iii) "Power: the transvaluation of authority". Under the first heading Roberts returns to the role played by the embodied doctrine of the incarnation within Anglicanism. He notes Sykes' comment:

it takes real theological skill to see how this doctrine both underlies and is interpreted by a worshipping body at once tolerant of theological criticism of it and yet aware of the responsibility as a matrix for the nurture of Christian character. (Sykes 1978: 52)

For Roberts, Sykes seems to be arguing that each worshipping community needs reflexively to embrace theological contradiction and organizational diversity but Roberts himself questions whether any worshipping body could have the level of consciousness necessary for a genuine "cohabitation of contradictory elements" (R. H. Roberts 1989: 176).<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, when Sykes argues that a key aspect of an Anglican view of authority is judgement on matters of faith lying "in the hands of the

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<sup>14</sup> Whereas I have argued throughout this study that churches and the Church are, of necessity, a cohabitation of contradictory elements.



whole people of God" (Sykes 1978: 93), Roberts questions the "socio-ecclesiological cash-value" of this statement by asserting that this, in effect, means a purely passive and receptive role for lay people within the Church (R. H. Roberts 1989: 181-82). Thus, within the context of Hegel's parable of the Lord and the bondsman:

It is a polarity peripherally modified by the power to block excess, but it is never the power to act or innovate. (R. H. Roberts 1989: 183)

Roberts aims to unmask what he perceives to be hidden statements of episcopal power in Sykes' discussion of Anglicanism while, at the same time, avoiding the tendency to move questions of authority towards a "dialectical impasse" which he also sees in Sykes' analysis. His appraisal of Sykes' work on the identity of Christianity falls into two parts, i.e. the latter two sections mentioned above: (ii) "Identity: the assertion of essence" – which addresses the first two chapters of *The Identity of Christianity*, while (iii) "Power: the transvaluation of authority" – deals with the later chapters of the same work. Under his heading of "Identity" he is critical of the way in which Sykes has handled what Roberts calls "the Pauline lust for unity" where he sees a sharp contrast between Paul's concept of unity and Sykes' more pragmatic appeal to contained diversity. For Roberts there are a number of key deficiencies in the approach that Sykes puts forward, particularly in his treatment of inwardness (R. H. Roberts 1989: 195-96). But he is most critical of Sykes' treatment of power, which can be summed up as follows. First, Roberts believes that Sykes' "relatively weak definition of power"<sup>15</sup> leads to a line of thought which "verges upon the authoritarian". While acknowledging that the Church has always had difficulty in finding "structures adequate for its embodiment" (R. H. Roberts 1989: 206), Roberts argues that an important reason for this is the inadequate analysis of power within the organization. Second, he questions what he sees as Sykes' advocacy of the ordained theologian as the mediator of the inward/outward dialectic:

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<sup>15</sup> Which is derived from Dennis H Wrong and Bertrand Russell and is held to be the "capacity of some persons to produce intended and foreseen effects on others". This, Roberts contends, should be replaced by the stronger Weberian definition that power is the "probability that one actor in a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis upon which this probability rests" (R. H. Roberts 1989: 200).

In short, should the theologian's integrity be expressed in the pursuit of truth or in commitment to the management of power in the Church? (R. H. Roberts 1989: 210)

In this respect and in support of a broader perspective on the role of a theologian, Roberts quotes with approval Sykes' summary of the thinking of the French Roman Catholic biblical scholar Abbé Loisy that "ecclesiastical authority is not in true nature domineering, but educative" (Sykes 1984: 142 and R. H. Roberts 1989: 212).<sup>16</sup> However, he argues that Sykes does not follow through such lines of thought and:

Despite Sykes' gestures in the direction of limited democracy in the Church (a vestigial lay veto on liturgical extremities) the threads of power lead back into the hands of a magisterial élite which, aware of its power, defines the reality in relation to which the believer is to sacrifice him or herself. (R. H. Roberts 1989: 217)

In summary, Roberts uses an all too graphic, embodied metaphor to underscore his criticism of what he sees as the inherent dialectical danger embedded in Sykes' perspective on the management of power:

It is this 'other' that dies in the Christian representation of the dialectic as embodied in the structure of *ordo* and *plebs*. This is not normally a violent public act but the quiet ecclesial practice of spiritual abortion, the unprotesting infantilisation of countless millions of embryonic believers upon whose behalf essential ministry presumes to interpose. (R. H. Roberts 1989: 222)

Thus, Roberts argues, the fundamental task facing the organization of the Church is to dispel the "theological invisibility of the laity" and "build structures of anticipation"

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<sup>16</sup> There seems to be a direct link here with MacIntyre's view that the role of higher education is a place "of constrained disagreement" designed to "initiate students into disagreement" (MacIntyre 1990: 230-31). See also my extension of this idea to the churches as places which initiate people into religious conflict and Christian diversity (V. S. Roberts 1993: 15, 1997: 273) and Torbert's metaphor of the university as "the church of modernity" (Torbert 1991: 229).

rather than to "promote regression and conserve hierarchical power" (R. H. Roberts 1989: 224).

#### 5.2.4'Nonstory': Stephen D. Moore & Power in Christianity

Before I search for a small-m metanarrative to address the issues of power in the Church raised by Sykes and Roberts, it may be helpful to explore a further approach which could be described by Roe's schema as a "nonstory" – in that it sharply critiques the principle narrative but is not recognisably a 'story' in itself. Stephen Moore's *tour de force* in transgressive reading raises a plethora of questions for any treatment of both the body and power within Christianity. He begins by acknowledging his own background growing up within the Roman Catholic community of Limerick as the son a butcher. He draws a sharp parallel between this home environment<sup>17</sup> and the Church with its central symbol was that of a tortured man whose death was re-enacted so vividly each Good Friday. Moore is concerned with how we are we to understand the crucifixion. He notes Martin Hengel's assertion that the crucified messiah demonstrates: "the 'solidarity' of the love of God with the unspeakable suffering of those who were put to death by human cruelty" (Moore 1996: 11) but contrasts this with some feminist readings of this event in terms of divine child abuse – "God the Father demanding and carrying out the suffering and death of his own son" (Moore 1996: 12). This pattern of understanding the crucifixion in terms of wrath and punishment can be traced from Paul through Anselm to modern theologians such as Barth, although there have also been dissenters such as Dodd, Bultmann and Sanders. A fundamental issue for Moore is this question of power: "the power of one person over the body of another, a power never more evident than in the relationship of the torturer to the victim – and never more disturbing, perhaps, than when the torturer is God and the victim his Son." (Moore 1996: 24). Perhaps it is significant, given the comments above by Sykes, Roberts and Percy regarding a certain reluctance to engage with the issue of power, that while this is an issue Moore returns to several times the word 'power' is nowhere listed in his index.

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<sup>17</sup> "I recall the hooks, the knives, the cleavers; the terror in the eyes of the victim; my own fear that I was afraid to show; the crude stun-gun slick with grease; the stunned victim collapsing to its knees; the slitting of the throat; the filling of the basins with blood; the skinning and evisceration of the carcass; the wooden barrels overflowing with entrails; the crimson floor littered with hooves." (Moore 1996: 4)

Interestingly his main partner in dialogue on this point, Michael Foucault, is listed several times and Foucault's assertion that the Christian faith "spread new power relations throughout the ancient world" in the form of "pastoral power" (i.e. power that is prepared to sacrifice itself for the salvation of the flock) is clearly important for Moore's own understanding of historic and contemporary Christianity (Moore 1996: 30-1). Moore points out that Foucault sees power at it most insidious when it wears a white coat and a professional smile which leads Moore into an extended exploration of the parallels between the professional worlds of biblical study and anatomy. Both disciplines are concerned with the dissection of bodies – biblical studies dissects a body of work while anatomy dissects the human body – and at various times both have been seen as socially unacceptable activities. Moore elaborates his thesis by contrasting ideas from biblical critics who have used anatomy as a metaphor for their work (Alan R. Culpepper's *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel* [Fortress Press, 1987]) and experts in anatomy have used their discipline to make historical assessments of the treatment of Jesus' body during his flogging and crucifixion. He concludes by applying the words of one of the last surgeons to perform a public dissection to the current state of the New Testament corpus: "I think few who now look upon that miserable mangled object before us can ever forget it." (Moore 1996: 72)

The links between body and power are focussed even more sharply in Moore's final section when he changes the embodied metaphor from body dissection to body building. He begins with Mary Douglas's study of Leviticus in which she argues an important element in holiness is wholeness and completeness and there is a strong connection here with current concerns about bodily perfection – particularly in the world of body-building. Moore offers some biblical descriptions of what he calls, the impressive "divine physique" (Moore 1996: 85) together with the originally androgynous nature of the bodies of both Adam (p. 90) and the God of Israel (pp. 92-4). This leads Moore to examine some of the embodied metaphors of power used for both the "father" and the "son". In his opinion one of the most intense and visual depictions of the bodybuilding God comes in the Book of Revelation, where the portrait of enthroned and embodied Divine Might has an unnerving correspondence to the world of bodybuilding where their gods are also enthroned as champions. Moore argues that there is something essentially fascist about both images particularly as the

writer of Revelation has appropriated the ideology of imperial Rome for the Christian God but has, by implication, extended it such that "Roman imperial power is but a parody or pale imitation of divine power". (Moore 1996: 127) Thus, in the Book of Revelation, just as the power of the Roman Empire (and Emperor) is symbolised in earthly cities by colossal, rock-hard bodies (i.e. statues of the Emperor) so the power of the Christian God is symbolised in like manner throughout this vision of the heavenly city. Consequently, it is only in the epilogue but with a certain degree of inevitability that the Nietzschean body of Moore's God stands revealed in all his might because the God of the Bible is nothing more (or less) than "a singularly pure projection of the will to power" (Moore 1996: 139) who is finally portrayed as a bodybuilding butcher who enjoys S & M and being a TV evangelist. Thus, Moore's narrative is merely another version of the modernist myth elaborated by Feuerbach and re-told in many different ways since.<sup>18</sup> It is significant for a discussion about the embodied nature of power that in one of the most 'powerful' of these re-tellings Friedrich Nietzsche rejects an ontology of dialectical embodiment, by privileging Dionysus over Apollo. Thus, in a similar fashion, Stephen Moore rejects a narrative of embodied dialectic by privileging 'self' over 'other' in his display of narcissistic pseudo-Postmodernism.

#### 5.2.5 Towards An Embodied Small-m metanarrative?

In its own way Moore's nonstory is just as much an act of narrative will to power as those stories he repudiates. It comes in a guise of reflexivity but is, in a Milbankian understanding of story – as noted at the outset – an attempt to "out narrate" the other narratives of power which Moore has rejected. I have argued throughout this study that a dialectical approach to embodiment is an essential element in using this metaphor for organizational description. An embodied social gestalt involves a dialectic of self and other which enables use and abuse of power to be critiqued within organizations. Thus, each organizational narrative can only be told if there is a degree of consensus about the nature of the story, yet the narrative itself and the collective

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<sup>18</sup> Interestingly Mellor & Shilling identify two modernities: "On the one hand, there is the modernity with which we are most familiar: that of Cartesian dualism, Kantian reason, Corbusier's *machine à habiter* and Habermas's 'ideal speech' situation. On the other hand, however, is another modernity: that of Schopenhauer's 'senseless will', Nietzsche's 'will to power', Baudelaire's flâneur, and the reassertion of sensuality in baroque culture." (Mellor & Shilling 1997: 131)

ideology surrounding it must continue to be reviewed and refined through a process of criticism. However this trajectory can be taken further since it not only allows for the telling of stories and counterstories within one social setting but also provides a way of mitigating and transforming the narcissism of the will to power. By actively encouraging an embodied dialectic of self and other, there is always an alternative narrative to a univocal discourse of power. Unlike Moore, Sykes and Roberts have taken an overtly dialectical approach to their understanding of the organizational role of power and authority within Christianity and the Church but, because they have a radically different understanding of the body metaphor, they arrive at two sharply contrasting analyses of this issue. Richard H. Roberts sets out his dialectical understanding of modern thought, Christian theology and ecclesial polity by arguing that the:

characterisation of the foundation of human existence in *assertion* and *negation* has entered the structure of modern thought in many forms, not least through Marx, Freud, Sartre and Michel Foucault (not to mention into feminist theory through Simone de Beauvoir). In Christian theology it is also present, be it in the epistemology of Protestantism (for example in Karl Barth) or the ontological hierarchy of Catholicism, and the pattern persists in the genteel ambivalence of Anglican polity. (R. H. Roberts 1989: 166 – my italics)

He has continued to develop a strongly dialectical approach in his thinking. Thus, not only does he contend: "the relation of modernity to postmodernity is dialectical" (R. H. Roberts 1996: 189) but also that postmodernity has provided a major dialectical challenge to theology, in that the reconfiguration of the theological task requires:

immersion in the dialectics of identity as they emerge from the history and evolution of the social and human sciences in the transitions of modernity. Religion and the expression of its critical and responsible reflexivity, theology, can become methodologically equipped to address this enigma of identity. They will have to do so, however, while being willing to confront the absolute contrast of the individual and the collective, the

relative and the absolute and the immanent and the transcendent. (R. H. Roberts 1997a: 716)

As a result, Roberts places theology in a dialectic between modernism and postmodernism, at the same time as calling for a renewed understanding of its function. Significantly, Sykes has placed Anglicanism within the context of a Catholic/Protestant dialectic and has also called for a similar reconfiguration of Anglican identity. On what should that identity be based? Essentially, in their use of the body metaphor within their dialectical analyses of the Church of England Stephen Sykes has privileged unity over diversity. Sykes acknowledges the important role that conflict has had, and continues to have, within Christianity but fails to maintain a dialectic between conflict and consensus by coming down on the side of the latter. By contrast, Richard Roberts has inverted Sykes' priority and privileged diversity over unity in the body. He, too, acknowledges the importance of conflict within Christianity such that he also fails to maintain the dialectic between conflict and consensus but this time coming down on the side of the former. I would argue that by providing a metanarrative, in the same sense as Emery Roe, it is possible to reframe this debate and find embodied possibilities for this conversation to continue creatively.

George Lakoff argues that through a process of 'functional embodiment' (the unconscious use of a category in a social setting) certain concepts are used automatically in a non-reflexive way (Lakoff 1987: 12-13) and, I would argue, there seem to be times when the aspects of the body metaphor (such as unity and diversity) appear to be used in this way with Sykes and Roberts. An another example of this is the univocal use of the body metaphor in the report from the Archbishops' Commission of the Church of England, published as *Working As One Body* (WAOB), where it is taken solely as an image for organizational unity. In this study I have followed Mark Johnson understanding of a 'gestalt structure' which he defines as: "an organized, unified whole within our experience and understanding that manifests a repeatable pattern or structure" (Johnson 1987: 44). I have explored how several aspects of an embodied gestalt structure framed my approach to ministry at the Chaplaincy Centre (Section 2) and at Christ Church (Section 3) as well as how it relates to my understanding of the origins of Christianity (Section 4). The next part

(5.3) examines how this gestalt of biography, relationality, reflexivity, dialectic and contingency shaped elements of my latter period at the Chaplaincy and Christ Church.

## 5.3 The Body in Question?

### 5.3.1 Introduction

I began this thesis by acknowledging that it did not follow an established research format. Instead it would be an account of how I set about my sensemaking activity in order to discover my role was as University Chaplain at the University of Bath using three rhetorical devices: (a) narrative; (b) metaphor; and (c) conversation. Consequently, this research has been a reflexive narrative of my conversations along the way, particularly in respect of: my understanding of epistemology (Section 1); my experiences as a chaplain in higher education (Section 2); my experiences at Christ Church (Section 3); my understanding of the key metaphor of the body in early Christianity (Section 4); and how that metaphor can shape different approaches to authority in the Church (Section 5). In developing my conversational hermeneutics I have found Anthony Thiselton's analogy of the GP's consulting room helpful (1.1), with its picture of an interaction of text books (established patterns) and patients' anecdotes (experience). In Weick's terms such sensemaking should involve a "good story" which:

shows patterns that may already exist in the puzzles an actor now faces, or patterns that could be created anew in the interest of more order and sense in the future. (Weick 1995: 61)

It is my contention that this thesis has been a narrative which has involved patterns that already existed together with patterns that could be created anew.

The search for an epistemological basis for this study, outlined in Section 1, lead me through the Enlightenment and the rise of Positivism to its gradual modification by late-Modernism and possible eclipse by Postmodernism. I suggested that the architects of modernity were Descartes and Kant, who had many fervent and able disciples – including Schleiermacher, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Marx, Nietzsche and Freud – all of whom have left their mark on this study (1.2). Schleiermacher as the founder



of contemporary hermeneutics; Hegel as the great exponent of dialectical philosophy; Kierkegaard and Freud as explorers of the interior; Marx as the guardian of the importance of a social context to faith and ideology; and Nietzsche as the celebrated rhetorician and unmasker of the will to power. However, I have argued that the great epistemological edifice of Positivism – including such bulwarks as scientific method, technological expertise and quantitative data – which has been built on their work is currently looking uncertain and unsound. Instead of being born into the family of Positivism, my research is more of the lineage of Phenomenology with a clear tendency towards a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach **(1.3)**.

Against that background, the importance of the body as an area of study has increased enormously in recent years and the metaphor of the body is, itself, a mass of plurality. As a result, the first section **(1.4)** explored some of the wide range of theoretical and practical literature which discusses the body as a metaphor for human social activity and touched on others (eg O'Neill 1985, 1989; Lakoff 1987; Johnson 1987; Featherstone 1991; Turner 1996 [1984]; Falk 1997 [1994]; Mellor & Shilling 1997). In particular I noted John O'Neill's five-fold sociological approach to embodiment: (i) The World's Body; (ii) Social Bodies; (iii) The Body Politic; (iv) Consumer Bodies; (v) Medical Bodies (O'Neill 1985). And Mellor & Shilling's three-fold socio-historical perspective: (i) The Medieval Body; (ii) The Protestant Modern Body; (iii) The Baroque Modern Body (Mellor & Shilling 1997). These studies particularly underlined the historical (or biographical) and dialectical nature of the metaphor. I drew attention to O'Neill's tension between physical and communicative bodies, and Mellor & Shilling's organizational dialectic between banal and sensual bodies (which, in turn, had parallels with similar patterns identified by Nils Brunsson (Brunsson 1989, Brunsson & Olsen 1993) and Carl S. Dudley (Dudley 1982).

Mark Johnson's work has been particularly important in identifying how the imaginative structuring of understanding is shaped by human bodily experience **(1.4.1 (C))**. Thus, the body is not 'mere' metaphor but provides an image schemata or gestalt which shapes the whole process of sensemaking. Not only is this the basis, in my understanding, for exploring both the relationality and reflexivity of the body metaphor but also its contingency. Bodies change and develop as time passes and therefore the shape and fitness of our bodies changes as well. Bodies also die and if

we are to use the body as a social metaphor, then we must also address this neglected characteristic of embodiment. However, the general social plurality of this metaphor is further replicated in the specific biographical (or historical) circumstances of Christianity and such metaphorical diversity has played an important role in this study.

There is a widely perceived view that Christianity has taken a predominantly negative view of the human body throughout its history (Turner 1996 [1984]), an opinion which is well summed up in Feuerbach's description of the archetypal believer which was observed in **1.4.2** (*footnote 19*). The irony of his assertion that "The Christian ... wants to hear nothing of the common, 'bestial' urge to eat and drink" is that eating and drinking is now seen as they key to Jesus life and work by many New Testament historians. Thus Theissen & Merz have argued:

Jesus Communicated his message in symbolic actions. It is illuminating that in part they interpret one another. His eating with toll collectors and sinners (Mk 2: 15ff; Matt 11: 19) shows that he was not afraid of being polluted by notorious outsiders, but trusted in the 'infectious' power of his charisma. (Theissen & Merz 1998: 431)

In other words, one of the key elements for this study and for the sensemaking process of my time at Bath is that Jesus established an embodied dialectical gestalt for those who would follow his way, which involves defining oneself in *relationship to* (and not *over against*) the 'other' (**4.2**). At the Last Supper Jesus defined his death in relationship to an "inversion" of the Temple cult in Jerusalem (e.g. Hamerton-Kelly 1994) and the radical reflexivity of the Jewish prophetic tradition which believed that it was possible to have a covenant without sacrifice. Such a covenant involved "the will of God being put in human hearts and God forgiving them their sins" (Theissen & Merz 1998: 434). Thus, the final meal with his disciples provides the link between Jesus' ministry in Galilee (characterised by healings, open table-fellowship and parabolic teaching) and his ministry in Jerusalem (characterised by symbolic actions in the Temple, together with his journey to, and death upon, the cross). It is my contention that within the context of Second Temple Judaism, Christianity began as audacious cultural, organizational and ritual redefinition of boundaries based on the

metaphor of a broken body and the actuality of a sacrificial victim. Jesus' broken (and resurrected or 'missing') body became the embodied basis for the continuing groups of his followers. If this is the case, a fundamental question that arises is: are these assertions support by Paul's further use of the body image in the early Church?

As I noted in Section 4.3, the question of whether Paul employed the body, as a religious and organizational metaphor for complex social redefinition remains a matter of some debate. A number of historians and sociologists have noted the innately conservative and hierarchical nature of the body metaphor (Fiorenza 1994 [1983]; Schottroff 1995; Martin 1995; Turner 1996 [1984]) particularly in European cultures. Questions regarding Paul's use of the body metaphor are particularly focussed on the issue of Paul and patriarchy. In this study I have followed Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and Luise Schottroff (Fiorenza 1994 [1983]; Schottroff 1995) in arguing that Paul used the metaphor of the body to establish the foundation for a fundamental challenge to Hellenistic hierarchy in all forms and provided a egalitarian vision for the church and society as a whole. Fiorenza notes that while it is difficult to ascertain with certainty Paul's position with respect to women and slaves in the community (Fiorenza 1994 [1983]: 218-19), she is nevertheless convinced that Paul shares a radical egalitarianism with the earliest Christian communities and that he sought to elaborate it in terms of the concrete situation in Corinth.<sup>19</sup>

It was in the context of the discussion about Paul's use of the body metaphor in 1 Corinthians that I outlined yet another plurality which this metaphor can take. In addition to the *social* and *historical* diversity which I have identified, there is a significant degree of *theological* diversity. Thus, in terms of Christian theological

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<sup>19</sup> John O'Neill also notes the transformative nature of this metaphor: "The body politic certainly emerges from a long allegorical history of the desire for the representation of unity and difference in a just society. It contains both a myth and a metaphysic which has been appended throughout the history of social and political conflict both for revolutionary and restorational purposes. It is a transgressive figure when opposed to caste interpretations of social division of labour, as well as a figure of difference and charismatic justice when opposed to the forces of rationalization and homogenization ... it is a transgressive figure because of its power to integrate what has been separated and to differentiate what has been homogenized. The body politic is a civilizational concept, to use the language of Frye, and it functions on the highest level of allegory to transfigure society in terms of the human body itself, imaginatively conceived as the universe of human potentiality." (O'Neill 1995: 126)

discourse the body can be a: (i) metaphor for unity; (ii) metaphor for diversity; (iii) metaphor for contingency; (iv) dialectical metaphor. These characteristics relate directly to my understanding of embodiment outlined in 1.5.2. There I argued that an organization whose gestalt is based on the body metaphor should exhibit five characteristics. Thus, an embodied organization should be: (i) Biographic; (ii) Relational; (iii) Reflexive; (iv) Dialectical; (v) Contingent. I shall now relate that 'text book' pattern to my experiential narratives at the Chaplaincy Centre and Christ Church.

### 5.3.2 The Chaplaincy as an Embodied Gestalt

#### (i) Biographic

It seems that little is directly anticipated *from*, or there are few overt requirements placed *upon*, the person who is University Chaplain at the University of Bath. My predecessor commented to me once that there were times when he felt that the University didn't know he existed and, independently, my successor has noted that it is strange to come into a job where there are almost no expectations of you. It is a role which has to be created by the person who inhabits it and, as Barry Morgan comments: "A great deal will depend on the personalities of the different chaplains involved and on the kind of chaplaincies they operate" (B. Morgan 1986: 141). I have described the embodied organizational hermeneutic which evolved in the process of my development into the role. Thus my understanding of the body metaphor means that an organization, in this case the Chaplaincy, will be biographic or should be consciously telling its story. This narrative function worked at different levels. Perhaps most clearly it was achieved through publications like the weekly *Chaplaincy News* (see Appendix 14) and the annual *Chaplaincy Update* (see Appendix 13). However, there was also a sense in which the Chaplaincy building itself was part of the story. Its history was regularly but informally re-narrated. Longstanding members of staff would comment that the role of chaplain pre-dated the chaplaincy; the building itself was not part of the original plans and only came about through an initiatives of the staff and a sympathetic vice-chancellor; as a centre it had to be "open to people of all faiths and of none". The nearest this story came to being formalised in my time was when Chris Gladstone (the second Lay Assistant) produced a webpage for the artwork in the Chaplaincy Centre which detailed some aspects of their history.

A third level of narration is also provided by liturgy. The stories of people's lives which make up the life of the institution are related, in this case to the Christian story. Such a process took place on a grand scale with events like the University Carol Service each year in Bath Abbey; on a poignant level with occasional funerals, weddings and baptisms in the Chaplaincy and at much more intimate ways through the weekly service of Holy Communion or daily evening prayer.

## (ii) Relational

Such liturgical functions also illustrate the relational nature of the body metaphor. There could be anything from 2 to 24 people at evening prayer most of whom would be involved in the Chaplaincy in some way; 80 to 120 people for funerals and memorial services most of which would only be seen at that specific occasion; and over 1200 for the Carol Service which would include many of the first two groups plus numerous others for what was, at the time, the largest single gathering of the University community. I vividly recall as an undergraduate the first time that the Chaplaincy organised a Carol Service in Bangor Cathedral, standing with the chaplain watching the building fill up and Barry Morgan commenting wistfully that this would be the only time he would see these people inside a church. It can be both heartening and frustrating to see large churches filled to overflowing on such occasions, while at the same time knowing that it will be the usual number at worship the following Sunday. However, although it will always sound like justification after the fact, I believe it is not insignificant that numbers played no part in Jesus ministry at all. From my reading of the gospel narratives, what was important was the quality of relationships and, in some ways, that works in inverse proportions to numbers of people. People need to relate to matters of faith and to the Church at different ways, at different times and organizational plurality facilitates such relationality. A good example of allowing people to relate in a very loose to the work of the Chaplaincy was through the weekly Oxfam bread and cheese lunch. Again, as an event, it was older than the University having being started by a previous chaplain when the institution was a college of advanced technology in Bristol. It had a peripatetic life around the University of Bath as various social areas were closed down and turned into offices or teaching rooms. Locations included a square in the chemistry building, the library, the parade and near the Student Union coffee bar. Despite this moveable location, in

most terms the simple expedient of providing bread, cheese and orange juice usually raised over £1,000 *per annum* for Oxfam. It also brought the Chaplaincy into a regular relationship with many people, particularly students, who would never have thought of going into the building itself. Another instance of effecting such relationality was through the Student Union's magazine *Spike* who were always keen for contributions and welcomed a regular column from the University Chaplain, originally entitled '*Just A Thought ...*' but subsequently and unilaterally changed by an editor to '*Vaughan Again ...*' (see Appendix 11 for some embodied thoughts arising from the university context and written for the December 1995 issue).

### (iii) Reflexive

The different needs of people when it came to reflecting on their own personal faith also provided us with a challenge when it came to the reflexive nature of the Chaplaincy Centre. From one quarter there would be those who wanted a very clear and simple statement of the Christian faith; from another there would be people from other faith traditions wanting support for pursuing their practices; from a third there would be others who wanted to ask highly critical and/or deeply theological questions of all faith positions; and then there would be yet another group wanting to somehow combine all of these. The publication of *Signposts* (Appendix 9) was one attempt to meet this challenge but we also arranged various lectures and meetings as well. Following the mission, *Missing Piece*, which the Chaplaincy ran in 1991 (which had a strong apologetic brief but little critical reflexivity) we organised a lecture by the Rt Revd David Jenkins (then Bishop of Durham) in November 1992 to coincide with the University's Silver Jubilee. His title was: *From Selfish Gene to Divine Community – Reflections on the Future of God*. This was well attended in a full University Hall which was, at that time, the largest space on campus for such events. One conversation I had following that event was with Dr David Packham, who was part of the group who organised the University's public lecture programme. He wanted to know how we had managed to attract so many students to the lecture since they were conspicuous by their absence from the other ones. On reflection I believe there were a number of significant factors, including: (i) the profile of the speaker; (ii) it was only a one-off lecture not a series; (iii) being in the autumn term meant that we could 'plug' the lecture in October when the chaplains went to speak to all the new students

during Freshers' Week. Following that we ran three further programmes of outside speakers at the University: Knowing That Matters (1993) aimed at encouraging Christianity to reflect on areas of study within the University of Bath; Poverty Week (1994) which focussed our reflexivity on practical questions away from the academic world; and Faith & Politics (1995) ran ahead of the British general election in the summer of 1996. The outline schedule for these three events were as follows (including, in the first series, the speakers' abstracts for their talks):

## Knowing That Matters:

### A Christian Response to Current Thinking

15th-19th February 1993

Monday - Professor Iain Prance, *Director, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.*  
5.15pm **The Care of Creation**

The Church has been slow to get involved in environmental protection issues. However, the Bible is full of references to our responsibility as stewards of creation. The lecture will challenge us to take a greater responsibility for creation because "The Earth is the Lord's". Christian stewardship of the environment must be based on the firm basis of a biblical theology of creation so that it makes us effective earthkeepers but does not lead us away from the worship of the Creator as happens with many secular environmentalists who worship creation. The lecturer will draw on his experience in the Amazon rainforest to present a biblical case for the care of creation.

Tuesday - Mr Don Latham, *Chief Executive, Wiltshire District Council.*  
1.15pm **Can you be honest and successful?**

God makes promises to those who act with integrity – strength, peace, guidance and wisdom. Honesty is part of God's character and we must act with integrity to please Him. What a man sows he also reaps. The lecturer will conclude that the choice of honesty brings true success. "By the blessing of the upright is the city exalted" (Prov. 11 v11).

Wednesday – Dr Elaine Storkey, *Executive Director, Christian Impact.*  
1.15pm **Christianity and Social Justice**

The Christian church has been fundamentally concerned with ethics, church order, worship, liturgy, tradition and sexual morality, and in the rush issues of justice can often drop away. This lecture attempts to look at questions such as: what is justice? the relationship between justice and rights; justice and freedom; justice and vulnerability; justice and humanness. It will be both historical and contemporary.

Wednesday – Professor Colin Humphreys, *Dept. of Materials Science, Cambridge University*  
5.15pm . **Creation, Chaos and Comets?**

Despite over 100 years of debate, the creation/evolution issue is still a live one to many people. In this talk we will consider a number of key questions. How old is life on earth?

How should the early chapters of Genesis be interpreted? Is a Christian view of evolution different from a non-Christian view? What about chance, chaos and comets?

Thursday – Professor Sam Berry, *Dept. of Biology, University College London*  
1.15pm **Science and Faith: alternatives or complements?**

Religious people have repeatedly reacted against scientific advances, from Galileo to Dawkins, via Darwin and the Warnock Committee. The lecturer will argue that there are intrinsic limits to science, and that we make best sense of our world by reading both the book of God (the Bible) and the Book of Nature.

Friday – Sir Robert Boyd, *Emeritus Professor of Physics in the University of London*  
5.15pm **Kinds of Knowledge**

The success of science based knowledge easily beclouds the validity of other kinds. In our personhood there are areas in which we neither operate as if we are merely information processing systems nor would we wish if we could. This lecture will relate the claim of Christians to know, to some other kinds of knowledge.

## 'Poverty Week'

**February 14th to 18th 1994.**

Mon 14th **POVERTY IN BRITAIN** – lecture by Dr Jane Millar (School of Social Sciences)

Tues 15th Film: Ken Loach's movie: **NAKED**

Weds 16th **ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE** in Chaplaincy  
Afternoon collection for **SEND A COW TO AFRICA** in Bath.

Thurs 17th **PANEL DISCUSSION AND FAIR** (with Oxfam lunch!)  
The Fair included stalls by various agencies active in addressing poverty. The panel included Michael Taylor (Director of Christian Aid), Judy White (Overseas Development Agency), Tony Vasallo (CAFOD), Shay Withnell (The Big Issue)  
**SEMINAR** – *Charities: More Harm than Good?* with Dr Michael Taylor at Manvers St Baptist Church.

Fri 18th **A TALK** on the current state of **ROMANIAN ORPHANAGES**



## Friday Forum: Faith & Politics

**1.15pm on Fridays in November 1995**

3 Nov David Alton MP (*former Liberal Party  
Speaker on Environment & Home Affairs*)

10 Nov Rt Rev Jim Thompson (*Bishop of Bath &  
Wells, Author & Broadcaster*)

17 Nov Rt Hon William Waldegrave MP (*Chief  
Secretary to the Treasury*)

24 Nov David Cairns (*Co-Ordinator of the  
Christian Socialist Movement*)

Also in the spring of 1995 we organised another public lecture by the Rt Revd Richard Harries (Bishop of Oxford) entitled: Art and the Beauty of God; to coincide with the dedication of a new triptych in the Chaplaincy Centre. Speaking personally, for me the challenge of encouraging reflexivity was best illustrated by the diversity of people who attended Knowing That Matters – which ranged from undergraduates, post-graduates and staff members from the university to an RE class from a local comprehensive school; interested citizens of Bath to several monks from Downside Abbey. Although it is organisationally challenging, it is possible to encourage a process of critical reflexivity across an enormous diversity of people.

### (iv) Dialectical

The dialectical nature of the Chaplaincy has already been discussed at length in Section 2. This is perhaps the most difficult aspect to the role of higher education chaplain and has therefore occupied a central place in my thesis. I mentioned above (5.3.1) Weick's reference to the help which is provided to the hermeneutical process by: "the symbolic trappings of sensemaking, the trappings such as myths metaphors,

platitudes, fables, epics and paradigms." And the importance of a good story which "shows patterns that may already exist in the puzzles an actor now faces, or patterns that could be created anew in the interest of more order and sense in the future" (Weick 1995: 61). For me, some of the dialectical tensions of being University Chaplain have been symbolically represented in the three major commissions of artwork which the Chaplaincy made between 1989 and 1996. Again these projects had conversational origins and three conversations, in particular, made an impression on me. First, I have already mentioned in Section 2 (2.2) the rather negative comments by both candidates and interviewees at my job interview regarding the nature and atmosphere of the building. I believe an important factor in this was the only piece of artwork which existed at that time in the Chaplaincy.



**Figure 5.2: *Alleluia* by George Lambourn**

It was a painting by George Lambourn called "Alleluia!" (Figure 5.2) and it never failed to provoke a strong response from visitors. People either liked or disliked it but they were never neutral. Significantly, for this study, the seven painted figures look

disembodied and spirit-like. The description of George Lambourn's widow which accompany the picture makes it clear that these figures are not meant to be embodied although their origins lie in a very real, human context. According to her, the picture began "as paintings and drawings of refugees from his memories of the retreat of the Allied Forces on Calais and Dunkirk, along the roads of Northern France choked with the terrified and bewildered people fleeing from the advancing German armies. For this he needed a symbol clearly human, but without particularisation – ageless, sexless, raceless. A symbol with which he could express humanity sharing and caught up in a great common catastrophe." Second, at around the same time I went to talk to the Archdeacon of Bath about the role of being a chaplain I also went to see

my diocesan bishop, George Carey. He was much more positive and practical in his advice, and amongst his suggestions was the idea of introducing one or two icons into the Chaplaincy's worship area. The final conversation took place, early on during my second year as chaplain in the genteel surroundings in a team room in Walcot parish. The then Rector of Walcot, Philip Myatt, commented that he had always thought that the Chaplaincy Centre had a disturbing atmosphere and he offered to exorcise the building for me. I declined his generous offer but decided the introduction of further artwork must be a priority. At around the same period, in the spring of 1991 the Chaplaincy Centre was given a sum of money by University Chancellor of the time, Lord Kearton. In conjunction with the Chaplaincy Management Committee it was decided to use this money to finance a programme of artwork for the Centre. This included a stained glass window by Meryl Stannard and two triptyches – one by Juliet Hemingray (which is based on Meryl Stannard's window) and another by Jackie Binns (which develops different motifs).



**Figure 5.3: *Spirit of Creation* stained glass window by Meryl Stannard**

The window was the first to be commissioned and designed (**Figure 5.3**). I suggested the theme of creation and in particular that point in the first Genesis creation story where "The earth was a vast waste, darkness covered the deep, and the Spirit of God hovered over the surface of the water" (Genesis 1: 2), while Meryl executed the design from her own imagination. Significantly, her depiction uses a distinctly dialectical pattern. In the top half of the window are various Trinitarian symbols for God

which are open to creation and underneath is the embodied form of a dove, which represents the Spirit of God brooding over the chaos. In some ways this can be seen as representation of the classic, dialectical understanding of God in Christian theology – a creative tension between transcendence and immanence (Macquarrie 1984; Sykes 1984; Jones 1996). From the point of donation of funds, through to discussion, commission, making, installation and dedication the project took two years, and it was

dedicated by the Rt Revd Jim Thompson on 4th May 1993. In the notes which accompany order of service for the dedication I wrote that the window: "is intended as a sign of hope to all who use the Chaplaincy and to be a symbol that God presence and love may be found in the noise and confusion of our everyday lives." As I look back on that statement, I suspect those words express my own state of mind about the Chaplaincy (and Christ Church) as much as anything else. At that point, I had been University Chaplain for three and a half years and, in effect, Officiating Minister at Christ Church for just over sixteen months. Although the role of Chaplain now seemed clearer and a Lay Assistant had been appointed with the help of Christ Church, the debate about the team scheme was raging and organizational chaos was an ever present factor in my professional and personal life.



**Figure 5.4: *Spirit of Creation* triptych by Juliet Hemingray**

It is therefore interesting to compare that description with the words I used three years later in the service to dedicate Juliet Hemingray's triptych on 7th March 1996. In this piece (**Figure 5.4**) a number of themes were reworked and developed from the window. It is striking to see what I wrote

then, taking up the idea from Proverbs that wisdom was pre-existent with God at the time of creation: "In Christian and Jewish imagery water is often a symbol for chaos or disorder in creation. When the Spirit of God is portrayed as brooding 'upon the face of the deep' and bringing harmony to confusion in the Genesis creation story, then it is a symbol of the human quest for knowledge of which the university is a part." It is interesting to note the combination of harmony and chaos because by that stage the team scheme had long been abandoned within Walcot parish, a third Lay Assistant had been appointed and the Anglican link between the Chaplaincy and Christ Church was (from my perspective) working well.

However, if the two designs by Meryl Stannard and Juliet Hemingray represented a theological dialectic between transcendence and immanence, and a personal dialectic for me between organizational stress and organizational accord; then Jacquie Binns work comes closest to the embodied dialectic which I have been exploring in this thesis (**Figure 5.5**). Christian motifs of embodiment abound in this triptych. Central to the whole piece is the figure of Christ, the physical incarnation of God in traditional Christian theology. He is sitting at table with bread and wine, the body of Christ in Christian worship. Surrounding the table are his disciples, the first members of the Church, the body of Christ in organizational or practical terms. To the left is King Solomon, another incarnational figure. In some Jewish theology wisdom has a pre-existent relationship with God and Solomon was an incarnation of that wisdom. Significantly, the side of the king which is closest to Christ is lighter and the side which is further away is darker. This too is a dialectical illustration, for the artist this symbolises that "even at its height, human spirituality is a mixture of both light and dark." To the right of the Last Supper is St Dunstan, a local monk from Glastonbury. He was a metalworker, a musician, an illuminator and a reformer of his monastic community.



**Figure 5.5: The *Wisdom of God* triptych by Jacquie Binns**

St Dunstan was chosen because, in my first year as University Chaplain, I invited a number of members of staff to preach about saints and Patrick Squire from the School



of Physics speculated on who would make a good patron saint for the Chaplaincy. Patrick's recommendation was St Dunstan because he was both an artist and a scientist – someone of impressive, 'dialectical' learning. A key experience for framing my understanding of being a University Chaplain was working through some of the collective expectations and tensions of being a similar group in the Chaplaincy Centre at the University of Bath, particularly that small eucharistic community of my first academic year (2.5) which developed into the Anglican link with Christ Church.<sup>20</sup> It has been fundamental to my thesis that dialectical embodiment involves defining oneself in relationship to (and not over against) the 'other'.



**Figure 5.6: Salvador Dali's *Last Supper***

The final picture which for me embodied the dialectical tensions of being University Chaplain was a small reproduction of Salvador Dali's oil on canvas

painting 'The Last Supper' (1955) which had hung in the Chaplaincy since it was built and was there throughout my time as University Chaplain (**Figure 5.6**). Although it may not be the most theologically profound work<sup>21</sup> it too came to represent the

<sup>20</sup> One of the points in the job description for the University Chaplain was the requirement to be: "An able leader of worship; there is a clear need to build up the corporate worship at the Chaplaincy, at present Sunday mornings and Thursday evenings" (2.3).

<sup>21</sup> According to Ian Gibson's biography of Dali, in 1956 *The Last Supper* "was scutinized by Paul Tillich. The distinguished theologian thought the work sentimental and trite, and was quoted as saying that Jesus looked like a 'very good athlete on an American baseball team'" (Gibson 1997: 488). That comment may well be true but it still does nothing to solve Schweitzer's perennial problem discussed in Section 4 that we all 'paint' Jesus in an idealised way, often in our own image.

dialectical embodiment of the Chaplaincy. The painting raises some questions already considered in this study. For instance, Dali's picture highlights the important role of table-fellowship in the early Church. Not only was this important throughout Jesus' life (4.2.2) it was also crucial in Paul's first Christian communities (4.3.2). The organizational and social significance of eating bread together remains with us in contemporary society in a metaphorical word like 'company' which is derived from the act of eating together (*com*) the same bread (*panis*) (Falk 1997 [1994]: 15). Nevertheless there is undoubtedly an ambiguity in the way in which Dali portrays the Christ-figure, which corresponds to a longstanding tension within Christianity over the physical nature of Jesus. On the one hand Jesus' humanity is essential to Christian notions of Incarnation and Atonement while, on the other hand, the embodiment of divinity in Christ has caused problems for a Christian understanding of the nature of God, especially in relation to the 'otherness' of God. Thus, Dali's Christ does not appear to be wholly human or fully embodied. The issues raised by his portrayal of Jesus go beyond a gnostic proclivity for a disembodied Christ to wider implications for any re-drawing or re-embodiment of Jesus. For instance, Dali's Jesus is much whiter than we would expect of a Palestinian Jew and the background to the scene appears to be hills from Dali's own Catalanian homeland. Such artistic licence illustrates an important aspect of any discussion about Jesus of Nazareth: he was an embodied figure who had an embodied existence in first century Palestine but our access to that figure is only through idealised representations, which are shaped by our own social context and cultural presuppositions. In other words, Jesus' embodied existence is continually 're-embodied' in a myriad of artistic, literary, historical, liturgical representations and my understanding of the embodied nature of the Church will be based on my re-interpretation of the historical Jesus.

#### (v) Contingent

Finally, in my concept of an embodied organizational hermeneutic there is the matter of contingency. I bade farewell to the University at the 1996 University Carol Service in Bath Abbey. This event, which had trebled in size from its original congregation of around 400 in 1988, was a mixture of well-known congregational carols and a variety of choral pieces sung by the University Chamber Choir interspersed with traditional biblical passages alongside Christian and secular readings (o/~o) – held together by a

theme. Of all the wonderful words and music which was familiar, inspiring and challenging one of the things which most sticks in my mind about that regular act of worship was a conversation at the door of the Abbey afterwards. It was not something which I noted in my research diary of the time because it didn't seem relevant but it is an encounter which has remained long after. It was probably after the carol service in 1993 or 1994, when I was saying farewells to the congregation. Two students bore down on me with something obviously on their minds. One shook my hands and said, in a tone which I took to be dismissive of what had just taken place: "We're Easter people." To which my immediate and off the cuff response was, "I'm more of a Good Friday person, myself." And as the flow of people continued out of the building he retreated with a surprised look on his face. I cannot claim that was the most profound theological conversation I had in over seven years as the University Chaplain but it captures something of the embodied story of birth, death and resurrection which is at the organizational 'heart' of the Church – all these elements occur together and you cannot have one aspect in isolation from the others.

If, as Hegel, de Certeau and Ward suggest, the Christian community began with the loss of a body, how should an 'embodied' understanding of the organization respond to a process of 'disembodiment' or taking leave of a situation. In some ways this is a pastoral question, rather than a theological question; a matter of bereavement rather than organizational theory. To refer back to my experience as a curate at Brambleton Hall (2.2), when I left that post after four years in 1989 having spent a great deal of time and effort working with children and young families I was succeeded by someone who did not feel that her gifts were in that particular area of ministry. Instead a pattern of work with older members of the community was established. The same has been true at the Chaplaincy Centre. I have been succeeded by someone who is different to me, who has a different vision to mine and whose gifts are not the same. That recognition is part of the hermeneutics of self and part of the organizational hermeneutics of my embodied dialectic. It is right that one form of work should die and another should take its place. Organizational change comes through a process of birth, life, death and resurrection but for those of us who have brought a pattern of work to birth, the hardest part is the bereavement and waiting for the surprise of the resurrection. The penultimate reading from that final carol service, which also provided that year's theme ("The Work of Christmas Begins ..."):



When the song of the angels is stilled,  
When the star in the sky is gone,  
When the Kings and the princes are home,  
The work of Christmas begins.  
To find the lost  
To heal the broken  
To feed the hungry  
To release the prisoner  
To rebuild the nations  
To bring peace  
To make music in the heart. (Anon)  
(Egan 1986: 73)

An embodied understanding of chaplaincy in higher education must acknowledge and embrace birth, life, death and resurrection in order for the 'music of the heart' to continue in a new shape and a new embodiment. Having considered an embodied approach to sensemaking in my experience of higher education chaplaincy, I shall now explore how that same metaphor shaped my understanding of Christ Church.

### 5.3.3 Christ Church as an Embodied Gestalt

#### (i) Biographic

As I have noted, my thesis employs three key rhetorical forms: (a) narrative; (b) metaphor; and (c) conversation. The theologian Gareth Jones defines rhetoric as the "art of persuasive discourse" (Jones 1995: 5). Significantly I began this section by noting John Milbank's question about "whether there can be a narrative that is not 'about' power?" (Milbank 1990: 263). The biographic account of Christ Church in Section 3 is clearly an act of persuasive discourse and a narrative about power. It should be apparent from what I have written that there were other narratives of what took place, for example Marcus Braybrooke (Officiating Minister at Christ Church until the end of 1991), John Burgess (Archdeacon of Bath until 1995), Graham Dodds (Rector of Walcot until 1995), Stanley Burden (Churchwarden of Christ Church until 1992) would all have given different accounts of what happened. The decisions about what elements to include in the narrative and way in which this story is told will shape the way in which readers will perceive what took place. This, of course refers back to the place of the narrator in the script which I discussed in 1.5.2 under the heading of the biographic nature of an embodied organizational hermeneutic.

However, even within Roe's approach of story and counter-story, the author plays a dominant role – for example in making a selection from the many counter-stories which could be used. For example in March 1994 I made a presentation of some of my research into Christ Church to a seminar consisting of other management students. One postgraduate coming from a strongly quantitative perspective, on learning that the average congregation at Christ Church 'only' consisted of 110 people suggested that the obvious answer was to shut the church down and send everybody to worship at Bath Abbey. The fact that of the 34 church electoral roles published in the diocesan directory for churches in the Bath Deanery, Christ Church was the sixth largest and the largest of the non-evangelical churches did not make much impression on this observer for whom the size of the worshipping congregation was obviously too 'small' to be concerned about. Nevertheless, in terms of congregational participation Christ Church was still the largest non-evangelical Anglican church and had the sixth largest attendance Sunday-by-Sunday. It would have been possible to explore this story/counter-story in more detail but the focus of this research has always been to seek ways of affirming pluralism rather than curtailing it.

A second example of the dynamic of story/counter-story which surrounded this narrative comes from two conversations in the Autumn of 1995 underlined this for me in a more practical way. I had written an early draft of Section 3 about Christ Church and circulated it to several of the protagonists in the drama including John Burgess (Archdeacon of Bath) and Jim Thompson (Bishop of Bath & Wells). My first meeting was with John who passed a few general comments and then said that the Bishop was rather concerned that my work contained various items of confidential correspondence, such as the letter from the Church Commissioners with their questions. Nothing further was added but the implication was that the Bishop would like such items to be removed. Shortly after I met the Bishop when he came to speak at a Friday Forum on faith and politics. He commented that he was reasonably happy with the account, although he felt that I had "let Christ Church off lightly". Then he added that John Burgess had been very concerned about the inclusion of some possibly confidential letters in my work, but he personally was not concerned about them. As will be clear from Section 3, this is not an isolated example of contradictory conversations or narrative regarding Christ Church. Again this dialectic of story and

counter-story between Christ Church and the diocese could have been the focus for this research, but I have argued throughout my thesis that this relationship is part of a much bigger picture and it was in this context that a new, reframing metanarrative (in Roe's sense) was urgently needed.

The new metanarrative of Christ Church's past outlined in **3.4** was used in a number of different ways. For example, the church magazine always had a small section on its back page outlining the historical background to the church. Prior to my research it read:

Christ Church was built at the end of the eighteenth century, at a time when worshippers had to pay a rent for their family pew. This prevented some people from coming to church, so Archdeacon Daubeney built and endowed Christ Church as a place where anybody could worship without paying. It was probably the first church in England not to charge pew rents.

After my re-telling of Christ Church's 'lost story' this was changed to:

Christ Church was built at the end of the 18th century by socially concerned clergy and lay people for those excluded from worship through the system of pew rents. It was probably the first church at that time, to provide seating free of charge. Early supporters included the Archbishops of Canterbury and York; the great evangelical campaigner against slavery, William Wilberforce; Philip Pusey, the father of E. B. Pusey and Martin Stafford Smith, the godfather of John Keble. Pusey and Keble were both founders of the Oxford Movement. The building was designed by renowned Bath architect John Palmer who was responsible for the completion of the Great Pump Room, Lansdown Crescent and Walcot Parish Church (St Swithin's).

There were a number of reasons for this change in the biography of Christ Church. First to encourage the current congregation to see the church as historically part of a much bigger picture. The founding of a 'free' church in Bath was not just about

parochial boundaries in the parish of Walcot but was part of wider social and ecclesiastical change. Secondly, in 1994 the Archdeacon of Bath dismissed Daubeney at a diocesan synod as merely an 'eccentric archdeacon' within the Church of England. I do not doubt that Daubeney could be seen as in some senses eccentric, but if that is all he was, how did he manage to draw together support for this project across the range of Anglican traditions? I have argued the story of Christ Church raises more profound issues than such comments suggest. It is my contention that the building of Christ Church was an early example of the Church of England finding ways to meet the emerging challenge of contemporary pluralism – a challenge that has continued to pose important organizational questions.

A second opportunity to try out this new 'metanarrative' came in October 1994 when I was invited by the Rector of Walcot to preach at St Swithin's on the text of John 4: 1-30 which is the story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman. In the course of my sermon I included the following historical résumé in which I tried to reframe the historical dispute over parishes since Charles Daubeney's time in terms of the much broader issue of diversity within the Church and society. I also used the Biblical story of Esau and Jacob in this sensemaking 'metanarrative', which continued to play a part in my understanding of this situation (see **(iv) Dialectic**):

Christ Church was a high Anglican mission church. It was also an early example of church planting – both facets of church life that are now associated with the evangelical wing of the Church of England. Perhaps it's important to clarify that the high church Anglicanism of Daubeney's time was before the Oxford Movement, that is, before the full-flowering of the things that we normally associate with that side of the Church – bells-and-smells, vestments, processions, incense, etc. The extent of high Anglicanism in those days was probably the use of candles on the altar and did not include all the things which we now associate with that label.

The reason for this brief review of the 18th century situation is to show that this church (St Swithin's) and Christ Church and Walcot Methodist Church actually share a great deal of common heritage. But, we three near neighbours are a bit like Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well.

On the face of it we shouldn't be talking. There should be an enormous gulf between us. The Samaritans and the Jews were like Esau and Jacob. They shared a common father but squabbled over the birthright. But Jesus did not allow that divide, or the divide of propriety, to separate him from his sister as she drew water at the well. Several of the churches in this parish share a common parent in the 18th century desire to see a renewal of the Church, a vision that was shared in different ways by Simeon, Daubeny and Wesley. The challenge that John chapter 4 makes to us is surely the same one that Jesus put before the whole Samaritan town: can we live without the artificial boundaries and treat each other as children made in the image of same God?

In my view, the situation in which Christ Church found itself in the early 1990s had very strong parallels with the Chaplaincy Centre at the University of Bath and these were focussed in a question of organizational hermeneutics – how is the Church in the widest sense going to nurture, encourage and affirm a plurality of narratives within its collective culture? For me, the only organizational metaphor which came close to being helpful in these situations was that of the body and particularly, the embodied characteristics of biography, relationality, reflexivity, dialectic and contingency which I have been discussing.

## (ii) Relational

In the same way that I took my leave of the University at the Christmas Carol Service, my last service at Christ Church was the link churches Candlelit Advent Carol Service. Like the university carols this too had grown over the years and regularly attracted a congregation approaching 200. It was a mixture of traditional and non-traditional Advent readings, plus Advent hymns, choral and orchestral pieces. The readers were all from the different Chaplaincy link churches but the relational character of the Advent Carol Service went beyond these immediate links. For instance, the Revd John Rackley (the Baptist Chaplain) and myself taught a number of courses in the University's Department for Continuing Education and in 1995 the choir from their Sing for Pleasure course also took part, while in 1993 the Claverton Players, a string group drawn from university students joined the Christ Church choir

in providing the music for the service. There are many other examples of this relationality, such as the joint Lent Lunches with St Mary's Roman Catholic Church (which was where the Catholic Chaplaincy in the city is based); the joint youth club run by students through St Mary's and Christ Church for which Keith Bell (a former president of the Methodist Society) won the University's annual prize for involvement with the community; and I shall consider the theological discussion group called First Thursday set up by some of the link churches under the heading of contingency below.

I had always hoped that the relational nature of the link between the Chaplaincy and Christ Church might help in encouraging some students and staff to explore their vocations to ordained ministry. Although my vocation had been nurtured within the context of the residential chaplaincy at Bangor, I never felt that it prepared me for the rigors of parish life. It was within this experience in mind that I felt that a link with a local church would be beneficial. It is difficult to measure whether or not this approach was a 'success'. During 1989 to 1996 four people associated with the Chaplaincy explored such a calling and two were recommended for ministerial training and two were not. Three more people have since begun that process, including a professor who is now in training for non-stipendiary ministry. I have no way of knowing whether any have been dissuaded from this path through their experience at Christ Church but that too could be seen as a 'success' if it means they have found a route that is better suited to them.

### (iii) Reflexive

I have already mentioned the reflexive nature of the Anglican link with Christ Church in respect the wide range of speakers who came to speak at the Link Services (3.1). Amongst the series' themes were:

***Dreams & Visions: Religion, Art & Culture***

***Christianity & the Media***

***Meeting Points With Faith***

***Christianity & Creation***

***Perspectives on Interfaith Dialogue***

## *Interfaith Perspectives on Jesus*

The speakers and their topics included:

- ❖ The Ven. George Austin ('The Future of the Church of England')
- ❖ Dr Zaki Badawi ('An Address for One World Week')
- ❖ The Very Revd Tom Baker (A Sermon for Dedication Sunday)
- ❖ Dr Edward Bailey ('Popular Religion')
- ❖ Professor Eileen Barker ('Sects & Cults')
- ❖ The Rt Revd Colin Buchanan ('Faith & Revival')
- ❖ The Very Revd Wesley Carr (Dedication Service)
- ❖ Fr Peter Cornwell ('The New Europe – A Challenge to Christian Disunity?')
- ❖ The Rt Revd Kenneth Cragg ('A Theology Worthy of God: Islamic & Christian Criteria')
- ❖ Rabbi Dr Dan Cohn-Sherbok ('Which Religion is Best?')
- ❖ The Very Revd Horace Dammers ('The Quiet Revolution: Christianity & Economics')
- ❖ The Revd Dr Trevor Dennis ('Faith, Stories & Understanding')
- ❖ The Rt Revd Timothy Dudley-Smith ('Hymns & Christian Experience')
- ❖ The Very Revd David Edwards ('A Guide to Debates About Jesus')
- ❖ Don Foster MP ('Religious Values in Contemporary Society')
- ❖ Anthony Freeman ('Jesus in the Sea of Faith')
- ❖ Dr Martin Goodman ('Jesus as a 1st Century Jew')
- ❖ Professor John Hick ('Jews, Christians & Muslims – Do We All Worship the Same God?')
- ❖ The Revd Tony Higton ('Christianity & Religious Advertising')
- ❖ The Revd Professor Andrew Linzey ('Do Animals Have Rights?')
- ❖ Clifford Longley ('Religion, the Media & Blasphemy')
- ❖ Dr Clive Marsh ('The Theology of "Babette's Feast"')

- ❖ The Rt Revd Michael Marshall
- ❖ Ysenda Maxtone-Graham ('Faith & the Press')
- ❖ Emma Nicholson MP ('A New Heresy? Church of England & the Ordination of Women')
- ❖ Chris Patten MP ('Religion & the Environment')
- ❖ The Revd Professor Arthur Peacocke ('Faith & Science')
- ❖ The Revd Donald Reeves ('Creation-Centred Spirituality')
- ❖ Dr Elizabeth Stuart ('Sexuality & Religion')
- ❖ The Rt Revd John V. Taylor ('Jesus: Human & Divine?')
- ❖ The Rt Revd Jim Thompson ('Inter-faith Dialogue, Theology & Social Justice')
- ❖ Dr Peter Vardy ('The Puzzle of God')
- ❖ The Rt Revd Rowan Williams ('Jesus the Troublemaker?')
- ❖ The Revd Professor Maurice Wiles ('Inter-religious Dialogue: A Christian Duty?')
- ❖ Ian Wilson ('The Turin Shroud after Carbon 14')
- ❖ The Revd James Woodward ('AIDS – Crisis & Opportunity?')

This pattern of a well-known speaker giving an address within the context of worship was by no means unique to Christ Church. I had been asked to initiate a regular series of four speakers (followed by discussion) during Advent as a curate at St Thomas-on-the Bourne. However, we experimented with different themes and ideas, including a popular term where past students from the University who were now ordained or pursuing a vocation to the religious life came back and spoke about their journeys since leaving Bath.

I expected these addresses to generate controversy and that was part of their *raison d'être*. However, the nature and direction of that controversy was unexpected. Probably the two speakers who generated most argument were Rabbi Dr Dan Cohn-Sherbok and Dr Elizabeth Stuart. It was not that the Rabbi spoke in the context of an act of Jewish/Christian worship or that Dr Stuart is gay and came with her partner which generated the heated debate, as might be expected. First, it was Dan Cohn-Sherbok's refusal to condemn witchcraft as a valid expression of spirituality in



response to a question from a Quaker which subsequently produced correspondence from the questioner to the bishop complaining that such speakers should not be allowed in Anglican churches. In many ways this was most surprisingly since this person had been one of the leading voices calling for interfaith worship in the Chaplaincy. Second, Dr Stuart's wholehearted condemnation of ideals and idealism in society and in the Church also generated some very heated responses following her address. However, for me that was an essential part of those services. It was important that such discussion and dispute arose from, and took place within, Christian worship since I believed (and still believe) that a recognition of pluralism, difference and debate are an essential feature of the Church and faith in God.

#### (iv) Dialectic

Important elements of the dialectical nature of my Christ Church narrative are captured for me in the ideas of the French literary critic René Girard and his concept of mimetic desire. I touched on Girard's ideas in my section on epistemology (**1.2.3 C**) and his thinking has been important in framing Hamerton-Kelly's understanding of Jesus' death which was discussed in **4.2.3**. Girard argues that the self-identity of human desire comes about through imitating the desire of others. This mimesis is not a biological drive but functions at a subconscious level. Girard takes up Freud's notion of triangular desire (1966: 186f; 1977: 193-218; 1978: 48ff) but instead of seeing this human drive in Oedipal terms he outlines his own mimetic reading of neuroses which, in later works he links to his concept of the "scapegoat mechanism". Initially mimesis is an acquisitive desire copied from someone else. If those involved in a mimetic relationship are close (geographically, physically, socially) then the relationship can turn into one of mimetic rivalry or scapegoating. This latter process consists of six aspects:

**A) Mimetic Desire** – our human identity emerges through learning from other people what to desire and copying them;

**B) Mimetic rivalry** – this desire leads to a paradox where one individual signals: "Be like me, value this object" but when another person does so then rivalry ensues followed by conflict.

**C) Crisis of Distinctions** – the shared desire results in the removal of differences. That, in turn, can lead to the collapse of social order which is based on individual and communal distinctions. However this possibility can be averted by society finding a scapegoat.<sup>22</sup>

**D) Necessary Victim** – in the past this role has fallen upon those who are: foreigners, eccentrics, witches, plague carriers, lesbians and gays, prophets, expounders of new ideas. The community focuses its conflict in an act of violence against the scapegoat and, as long as the fiction of the scapegoat's guilt is maintained, the group is able to move back towards co-operation and reconciliation.

**E) Sacralizing the Victim** – the act of violence against the scapegoat generates religious myth and ritual which then undergirds the more general culture of the group. As this process develops the victim is seen as sacred, and even divine, by being both accursed and life restoring.

**F) Sacrificial Repetition** – this ritual then channels any future internal aggressions through a ceremonial re-enactment of the scapegoat mechanism.

Thus the foundation for the scapegoat mechanism is mimetic desire, i.e. it is only through the existence of a rival with a similar desire that one's own acquisitive desire is confirmed. In this framework, we are not motivated as Nietzsche thought by the will to power but by the will to difference which is characterised by triangular relationships, rivalry and conflict – something illustrated by Nietzsche and Freud's own personal relationships (Girard 1978: 61ff). Girard argues that this phenomenon of mimetic rivalry, together with the violence it generates, is at the heart of human society and culture and is present in many communities' foundation stories. Religion is a means of legitimating or concealing such acts of founding violence through the scapegoat mechanism and the rituals of sacrifice. Therefore:

Sacrifice plays a very real role in these societies, and the problem of substitution concerns the entire community. The victim is not a substitute for some particularly endangered individual, nor is it offered up to some individual of particularly bloodthirsty temperament. Rather, it is a

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<sup>22</sup> Cf Sims, Fineman & Gabriel 1993: 171 on scapegoating in organizations and Beck 1992: 75 on the scapegoat society.

substitute for all the members of the community, offered up by the members themselves. The sacrifice serves to protect the entire community from its own violence; it prompts the entire community to choose victims outside itself. The elements of dissension scattered throughout the community are drawn to the person of the sacrificial victim and eliminated, at least temporarily, by its sacrifice. (Girard 1977: 8)

In *Violence and the Sacred* Girard draws on the work of a number of modern ethnologists but also examines Greek and Hebrew myths. In this respect the stories of brothers at odds with one another – such as Romulus and Remus, Cain and Abel and Esau and Jacob (Girard 1977: 4-6) – are particularly important. He argues that for some societies the fact of familial similarity is a cause for alarm. Girard also cites research by Malinowski amongst the Trobriander culture as supporting his contention that:

To accuse two close relatives of resembling one another is to assert that they are a menace to the community, the carriers of an infectious disease. (Girard 1977: 60)

The basic mythical theme of the enemy brothers, with the stories of their conflicts and (almost inevitably) their fratricide, is found across many communities and cultures. It is certainly fundamental to western society:

We instinctively tend to regard the fraternal relationship as an affectionate one; yet the mythological, historical, and literary examples that spring to mind tell a different story: Cain and Abel, Jacob and Esau, Eteocles and Polyneices, Romulus and Remus, Richard the Lion-hearted and John Lackland. The proliferation of enemy brothers in Greek myth and in dramatic adaptations of myth implies the continual presence of a sacrificial crisis, repeatedly alluded to in the same symbolic terms. (Girard 1977: 61)

Girard's thesis has important implications for understanding personal and group identity. For example, if human social and self-understanding is constructed along

Girardian rather than Nietzschean lines then knowledge cannot be reduced merely to a will to power. In turn, that has implications for the way in which we understand individual and organizational behaviour. There seemed to me to be some fascinating parallels between his theories on mimetic rivalry, as exhibited by enemy brothers of the same family, and the history of conflict between Christ Church and Walcot Parish – particularly with the story of Jacob and Esau. There is a link here with Hopewell's use of classical myths to reframe contemporary congregational stories (Hopewell 1987).<sup>23</sup> In his approach to congregational sensemaking he argues that it is important to choose non-Biblical stories however the similarities between the Jacob/Esau myth and Christ Church/Walcot appeared to me to be too striking to ignore:

1. **they are of the same family** – Jacob and Esau shared the same parents and lived in the same extended family. Christ Church and Walcot shared the same Anglican heritage and were part of the same diocesan family.
2. **they were different at birth** – Esau was the elder, Jacob the younger and they were born with different physical characteristics. Walcot was the older, parish church while Christ Church was the younger church plant. Walcot had all the usual characteristics of a parish church while Christ Church shared the nature of newer voluntary or associational churches.
3. **the differences increased as they grew** – Esau became a hunter and loved the outdoor life while Jacob was a quiet man who stayed at home. Walcot parish went off exploring and became part of the growing evangelical wing of the Church of England while Christ Church stayed within the High Church family.
4. **the younger one deceives father** – one of the best testified stories in the family history of Christ Church is how, when the Bishop of Bath and Wells came to consecrate the building in 1798, the Bishop inquired about the necessary funding for the ongoing life of the church and upon which the consecration was conditional – only to learn that there wasn't any. A quick compromise involving pew rents for the galleries was hammered out in the vestry in order that the service could go ahead.
5. **they quarrel over the birthright** – the bitter quarrel between the two brothers over their father's birthright is mirrored in the arguments that have flared up

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<sup>23</sup> Cf Handy 1991 [1978] and Hampden-Turner 1990.

between Walcot and Christ Church over rights in the parish, which is the 'birthright' bequeathed by 'the father' (the bishop).

6. **younger one is forced into exile** – Jacob is forced to leave the immediate family and take refuge with relatives. Christ Church has remained on the edge of the diocesan family, not really part of its ongoing life (e.g. Deanery Synod) and only able to take part in things through special pleading.
7. **younger one has two marriages** – while he is with Laban, his uncle, he marries Rachel and Leah. Christ Church could be considered to have married twice. First, the idea of a parish and second, the links with the world of education.
8. **reconciliation** – in a sense, this is the piece of the story that is missing because there has not been a 'reconciliation' between Walcot and Christ Church in the same way that there was between Esau and Jacob.

Although neat resolutions make pleasing parables they do not usually reflect the resolution of problems within everyday life and within everyday organizations (Eden, Jones & Sims 1983) and the same has been true in my experience at Christ Church and the Chaplaincy. Despite the intriguing similarities, my attempt to deconstruct the story of Christ Church and Walcot Parish along the lines of Girard's fraternal dialectic did not appear to provide a basis for resolving any of the organizational difficulties. Furthermore, as Paul Bate has argued from an organizational perspective, perhaps it is:

Better that ends are not ends at all but beginnings, opening up a subject rather than closing it down, offering future avenues to explore and revealing juxtapositions and interplay of ideas rather than some mythical finished jigsaw. (Bate 1994: 236)

In Girard's analysis, the social consequences of such a dialectic is often a process of scapegoating. Alternatively, to see the dialectic of the Christ Church narrative in terms of Emery Roe's analysis of story and counter-story means that the next step is that of metanarrative. I have tried to provide a metanarrative for Christ Church and Walcot which avoids the process of scapegoating by seeking to acknowledge differences in an organizational hermeneutic which affirms the 'other'. A number of positive attempts were made to build bridges on the basis of this affirmation of our

different but common membership of the same body. However, the Rector of Walcot, the Revd Graham Dodds, left in 1995 and a new and potentially complicated scenario emerged. The new rector, Dr Hartmut Kopsch, who arrived in 1996 had been vicar of an evangelical Anglican church in Birmingham where Conrad Calvert, a former University of Bath Student Union Vice-president and one of the churchwardens of Christ Church, had been a member prior to and during his time at university. When Conrad had 'come out' as gay there had been a rift between the two men and a series of letters to the diocesan authorities in Birmingham had ensued. It remains to be seen what effect, if any, this sensitive situation will have on the already sensitive relations between the two churches.

#### (v) Contingent

The contingency of this 'body' is well illustrated by the theological discussion group First Thursday which met at three of the Chaplaincy Link Churches – Manvers Street Baptist Church, Central United Reformed Church and Christ Church. It was an concept that grew out of another idea that had died and First Thursday nearly expired itself before having a new lease of life before finally dying in 1996. Prior to First Thursday a number of churches in the centre of Bath ran a programme called The Christian Night School. This had ceased before I arrived in Bath in 1989 but there were still a number of people who regretted its demise. First Thursday was an attempt to provide a reflexive arena in which those within our churches and any interested parties on the fringes could debate a variety of theological and ethical issues. It started in October 1993 and ran for four years. The first year (1993-94) was on apologetics, including sessions on theology, the Bible, doubt and interfaith dialogue. The second year (1994-95) was called Tough Issues subtitled "Moral questions Christians face today; how do we make up our minds – how do we act?" The third year (1995-96) was entitled Crossing the Boundaries: Faith Journeys in which four speakers who had changed their faith allegiance either by moving to another faith or converting to a different denomination within a faith spoke about their experience. The group nearly finished at this time feeling that it had served its purpose. However, when the rather tired planning committee reconvened to look at whether there should be another series in 1996-97 the proximity of a general election inspired a fourth and, as it turned out, final programme on Election Issues – such as health, crime, education and international debt. Although these sessions were regarded as successful it was

decided to let the group die and allow space for new ideas and projects take their place. Just as an embodied understanding of chaplaincy in higher education must acknowledge an organizational process of birth, life, death and resurrection (5.3.2 (v)) in order for the 'music of the heart' to continue in a newly embodied form, so too must the ministry of local churches recognise a similar pattern in their individual and collective activity.

#### 5.3.4 Summary

I stated at the outset of this thesis that it would not follow an established research format. Instead it would give an account of how I set about the process of organizational sensemaking through narrative, poetry and conversation in my context of University Chaplain at the University of Bath and Officiating Minister at Christ Church, Bath. I also stressed that, following Gillian Rose's observation about the place of fratricide in the intellectual process, I would try and avoid such academic assassinations – especially as the environment of higher education is as equally prone to scapegoating as is the religious world. My introduction outlined three conversations which had helped shape the subsequent narrative. The first was with the Venerable John Burgess (the Archdeacon of Bath) on the nature of Chaplaincy ministry. The second was with Dr Douglas Peters (Lay Chair of Bath Deanery Synod and member of the Church of England's General Synod) on the curious place of Christ Church within the Church of England. And the third was with my supervisor Professor Iain Mangham on the nature of knowing. Although, these conversations helped shape the format of the first three sections of my research (on epistemology, the Chaplaincy at the University of Bath and on Christ Church), one of the problems I have had is that of chronology. In this narrative the sections have followed sequentially, in 'real time' all three ran in parallel and interacted with one another. That is one of the reasons why this last section has included reflections on epistemology (5.2), the Chaplaincy (5.3.2) and Christ Church (5.3.3).

The first section set out the epistemological framework within which this study was working and I used Thiselton's analogy (Thiselton 1995: 55) of the GP's consulting room where the patterns provided by text books and the personal glosses of the patient are brought together (1.1). Section 1 dealt almost exclusively with patterns from text books, tracing an epistemological journey through modernism, positivism (1.2) and

phenomenology (1.3) to the embodied reflections (1.4) of late-, neo- or post-modernism. A significant aspect of phenomenological ontology for me personally and for this research has been the importance of 'other' in the hermeneutics of self and the importance of organizational others in a social hermeneutic (1.3.3). I concluded by setting out the five elements which, I concluded, were fundamental to an embodied organisational hermeneutic of the Church: (i) Biography; (ii) Relationality; (iii) Reflexivity; (iv) Dialectic; (v) Contingency (1.5.2). The next two sections explored my personal narratives of events at the University of Bath Chaplaincy Centre and Christ Church and began to establish connections between 'text book' patterns and personal experience, in accordance with Thiselton's hermeneutic analogy.

Section 2 narrated some of my key pre higher education experiences in ministry, which helped to frame my initial understanding of the role of University Chaplain (2.2). My initial sketch of the body as an organizational metaphor was challenged and shaped by such things as: the interviewing procedure for the post; my encounters with other chaplains; and the research of Barry Morgan into models of HE ministry (2.3). Perhaps the most important event from this time was the Chaplaincy Mission (2.4), which led to two published papers on the nature of chaplaincy work (Roberts 1992; 1997). The outcome of that first academic year in the job was to establish an Anglican link with a church in the centre of Bath alongside the city centre presences of my ecumenical colleagues (2.5). Section 2 concluded by affirming the link made by Barry Morgan between the hermeneutics of self and organizational hermeneutics:

A great deal will depend on the personalities of the different chaplains involved and on the kind of chaplaincies they operate. Inevitably each person brings to the task his or her own personality and gifts and each university influences and shapes the way a chaplain's job is done according to its own tradition and resources. (Morgan 1986: 141)

My narrative of events at Christ Church began by outlining the early links that this church had with my appointment at the Chaplaincy and how it too was involved in a complex procedure of hermeneutical definition within the Church of England (3.1). Soon after the link with Christ Church was established the Diocese of Bath & Wells initiated a proposal for a team scheme in the parish of Walcot which would include



Christ Church as part of the new benefice. As I state in my introduction (3.2) this is not an easy matter to describe because it was so painful for many members of the congregation and there were 'stories' and 'counter-stories' in abundance. Parts 3.3 and 3.4 contain my efforts to retrace the steps which led to Christ Church being in that situation and to provide a broader framework for understanding the many conflicting stories which were being told at that time. The final part of that section (3.5) returns the narrative to the Chaplaincy and describes how the link with Christ Church was central to setting up the post of Lay Assistant.

Having identified the Chaplaincy Centre and Christ Church as organizational anomalies within the Church of England, Section 4 returns to Thiselton's idea of 'text book' patterns to explore how the notions of being an anomaly or a 'stranger' (Kristeva) or an 'other' (Ricoeur) have important parts to play within the hermeneutics of self and the organizational hermeneutics of the Church. In this respect, a pattern of Jesus as an 'other' within first century Judaism is elaborated in 4.2 and a pattern of Christianity as an 'other' within the Imperial Hellenism of the Mediterranean culture in which Paul travelled (4.3) both frame some of the wider issues for this study. In both these narratives the body metaphor plays a vital role in shaping and these studies have assisted me in the process of exploring what Mark Johnson calls an embodied gestalt (Johnson 1987) for the Church (4.4). The neglected feature in the narrative thus far is what Gillian Rose has termed the "participation in power" (Rose 1996). It is the relationship of the body metaphor to notions of power within the context of the Church of England which occupied the first part of this section (5.2). I have argued that the dispute between Stephen Sykes and Richard Roberts over power within the Church of England is directly link to their use of the body metaphor. In the second part of this section (5.3) I have explored how my understanding of an embodied gestalt in terms of biography, relationality, reflexivity, dialectic and contingency helped to shape my developing understanding of the Chaplaincy Centre, its Anglican link with Christ Church and its wider links with other churches in Bath.

## 5.4 Conclusion: The Church as an Embodied Gestalt

Although I have identified considerable diversity of view within the worlds of biblical studies, social sciences and management over the significance of the body as a

metaphor for the Church (and other organizations), it could be argued this is only to be expected if we exist within a 'post-modern public square' (Markham 1994) or a 'risk society' (Beck 1992) which not only works with, but generates a plurality of views.<sup>24</sup> Is there an embodied cognitive model or gestalt structure which shapes a general understanding of the Church as the Body of Christ? One theologian who has developed such a gestalt organizational understanding of the Church is Peter Hodgson and I considered some of his ideas in my introduction (1.4.2). I noted then his observation that:

God is present in specific shapes or patterns of praxis that have a configuring, transformative power within the historical process, moving the process in a determinate direction, that of creative unification of multiplicities of elements into new wholes, into creative syntheses that build human solidarity, enhance freedom, break systematic oppression, heal the injured and broken, and care for the natural. (Hodgson 1989: 205)

He went on to develop those ideas (Hodgson 1994), arguing that the gestalt of the Church is characterised by four attributes: (i) *Embodiment* – the crucifixion of Jesus' body is fundamental to Hodgson's understanding of a Christ-Gestalt. It is the 'not-Godness' of Jesus' death which is significant because, for Hodgson, God is definitively present in the world not in some perfect human form such as Greek statue but in Jesus' finitude, mortality, susceptibility to suffering, sexual and ethnic specificity; (ii) *Incarnational Praxis* – Jesus incarnates a transformative praxis which builds human solidarity, enhances freedom, breaks down systematic oppression, heals the injured and broken, and cares for the natural world; (iii) *Wisdom of God* – the Christ-Gestalt is engendered by the Wisdom of God, which is the mode of God's spiritual presence in the world. God shapes spiritually and ethically by indwelling, moving, empowering, instructing, inspiring human individuals and communities; (iv) *Relationship with other Gestalts* – these include the 'root experiences' of Judaism

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<sup>24</sup> "The theoretical content and the value reference of risks imply additional components: the observable conflictual pluralization and multiplicity of definitions of civilization's risks. There occurs, so to speak, an overproduction of risks, which sometimes relativize, sometimes supplement and sometimes outdo one another." (Beck 1992: 30 – author's italics)

(exodus, prophecy, exile, messianic kingdom) and ecclesial existence (a mode of existence transfigured in the direction of nonprovincial, non-hierarchical, nonpatriarchal, nonethnic communion of persons, open to all without prior conditions (Hodgson 1994).

My criticism of this approach would be that in this description Hodgson has not followed the pattern of his own gestalt. He speaks of God being present in the world not as some Greek statue but in Jesus' inconvenient specificity, yet his image of the Church is of a perfection which seems more akin to the Greek statue than anything which is remotely 'inconvenient'. My experience, set out in this thesis, is that the Church is most inconvenient in its specificity as well! At the heart of my understanding of an embodied Church is an understanding of oneself in terms of another, one's group in terms of another group and one's organization in terms of another organization. Consequentially, a 'self' must affirm 'space' for the other to exist and flourish – even if that 'other' does not reciprocate. The embodied gestalt of the Church (as biographic, relational, reflexive, dialectical and contingent) is brought to birth through an ongoing critical history of conditional relationships.

Therefore, in terms of chaplaincy ministry in higher education, the some of the practical outcomes from such an embodied gestalt will be: (i) an affirmation of the religious diversity within the institution; (ii) active recounting of the stories of those diverse communities; (iii) an engagement in critical reflection on their own relationships and wider relations in the university and higher education; (iv) supervision and management of conflict as an important part a dialectical understanding of pluralism; (v) a willingness to change and a provisionality of structure. In terms of the relationship between Christ Church and Walcot parish the practical outcome will be similar and include: (i) an affirmation of each other's existence within the wider body of the diocese; (ii) active retelling of their stories which presupposes a knowledge of their own biography and each other's biography; (iii) critical reflection on their relationship together, with the wider Church and with other faith communities; (iv) an acknowledgement of conflict as an important part a dialectical understanding of pluralism; (v) a willingness to change and a provisionality of structure.

For me this five-fold understanding of embodiment is captured in the centre-piece of Jacquie Binns embodied triptych where the incarnate Christ is placed in a circle with his disciples around the table of the last supper (**Figure 5.7**). In this portrayal of Jesus and the twelve we have, from an historical perspective, the biography of Jesus as an embodied person and, from a theological perspective, a biographical depiction of the early history of the Church (the body of Christ) in the disciples. The relationality of the picture is highlighted by the differences between the disciples. Drawing on my conversations with Jacquie while the triptych was being made, I described it thus in the notes for the service of dedication at the Chaplaincy: "Each of the apostles is pictured individually with different colours, fabric, characters and ages conveying the important truth that the Christian image of God is essentially relational at heart."



**Figure 5.7: The centrepiece of the Last Supper in the 'Wisdom of God' triptych**

In addition, it is significant that the picture contains the twelve disciples from the Last Supper and therefore includes Judas – the symbolic 'other' in the passion narrative. Reflexivity is represented in the circular theme of the work. For the artist, circularity is symbolic of meditation and the motif is developed in the main circle of gold; the circle of the figures; the circle of hands; the circle of the table; the circle of Christ's halo and the circles on the table (the plate and goblet). The focal point of the picture is Christ presiding at the

meal and this reflects a number of important dialectical ideas for this study – the incarnation (humanity/divinity); the body of Christ (Jesus)/the body of Christ (the Church); self/other; group (or organization)/non-group (or non-organization). In that respect, I would argue that the "inconvenient specificity" of the Church as an organization is represented by the haphazard and non-symmetrical way in which the items have been put on the table. Finally, the contingency of this embodied work can also be detected in a number of places; most notably in the fact that this was Jesus'

last meal with his disciples before his own death. It is not often noted but this was also Judas' last meal within the group as well and in this picture we see a foreshadowing of the death of the central character and the 'other' in the passion narrative.

I noted in my introduction and in Section 1 how the body metaphor was important for my concept of the Church and my role as an ordained minister within that organization. This thesis has traced the development of that metaphor from a relatively simple image for organizational diversity through to a deeper understanding of how such an embodied gestalt can shape both ideas and events in a much more profound way. I began by stating that I would use narrative, poetry, conversation and sensemaking in an exploration of the hermeneutics of self and the organizational hermeneutics of being a higher education chaplain at the University of Bath. This is my narrative and it is offered as part of the ongoing dialectic of listening and conversation through which we learn from one another.

## Appendices Introduction

The following appendices are referred to in the text of my thesis and are also designed to illustrate the diversity of my sensemaking environment. Two come from my initial experience as an assistant curate in the Parish of St Thomas-on-the Bourne, Farnham (Appendices 1 and 2). Three relate specifically to the student context at the University of Bath (Appendices 4, 13 and 14). A further seven provide background to the organizational debate surrounding Christ Church and the development of the Chaplaincy's Anglican link with that church (Appendices 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11). Two of them help to describe some staff context to higher education ministry at the University of Bath (Appendices 3 and 12) and the final appendix is provided as a concluding 'Unscientific Postscript' in the epistemological tradition of Kierkegaard in which this thesis stands (1.2.2 C).

**Appendix 1:** *'The Journey'* by Vaughan Roberts (published in **Together**, No. 346, October 1989)

In Section 5 I used the story from Genesis of the two brothers Isaac and Jacob to provide a Girardian reading of the relationship between Christ Church and Walcot Parish (5.3.3 iv). This is a narrative that I have long been fascinated by and this version is my own re-telling of my story, written prior to taking up the post at the University of Bath. I believe it how certain stories remain with us and help to frame the ongoing sensemaking processes in which we are involved.

**Appendix 2:** *'Umberto Eco and The "Habit" of Family Communion'* by Vaughan Roberts (published in **The Modern Churchman New Series** 31 (2): 10-15)

This is the most important sensemaking narrative from my time as an assistant curate in Farnham. It attempts to provide a framework for understanding the diversity of needs in that and the wider Church. A key element for this thesis is the conclusion which uses the body metaphor as a means of resolving the demands of plurality. As I noted in Section 2 (2.2, 2.3 and 2.4.1) this provided the starting point for my organizational sensemaking as University Chaplain.

**Appendix 3:** *'Future Role of University Chaplain'* a paper by The Revd Francis Buxton

I have included this paper by my predecessor as University Chaplain. First it gives the reader a brief but clear impression of how it is possible for another Anglican priest to frame higher education ministry at Bath in a significantly different way. This is in line with the role that the ‘other’ plays in my epistemology outlined in Section 1 (1.3.3 and 1.5.2). Second, it provides an alternative source of evidence for some of the issues around the role of higher education chaplain considered in Section 2 (2.3)

**Appendix 4:** *‘The UCCF Doctrinal Basis’*

The UCCF Doctrinal Basis was the subject of my first attempt at organizational sensemaking as a higher education chaplain (Roberts 1992) and it is discussed further in Section 2 (2.4.1). For those not familiar with its contents, the full 11 points are set out here, as taken from *Evangelical Belief A short explanation of the Basics of the Doctrinal Basis of the Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988).

**Appendix 5:** *‘The Early Historical Documents of Christ Church’ (from around 1794-1801)*

Much of the debate throughout the discussion of the proposed team scheme with Walcot Parish focused on issues which were linked to the foundation documents of Christ Church and their interpretation. In particular two questions remained unresolved: (i) whether Christ Church was founded for the poor of Walcot Parish or for the poor of Bath; and (ii) who had the authority to appoint the Officiating Minister at Christ Church (i.e. the power of ‘Patronage’). These documents played a key role in the subsequent interpretations (see appendices 6, 7 and 8).

**Appendix 6:** *‘The Archdeacon of Bath’s Interpretation of the Trust Deed’* (January 1992)

In January 1992 the Venerable John Burgess, the Archdeacon of Bath and then Chairman of the Christ Church Trustees, set out his understanding of the status of Christ Church in the light of the 1801 Trust Deed in a document headed "The Christ Church Trust". It makes a number of claims about the history and role of Christ Church which others disputed and was one of the reasons that I began to make my own historical investigations.

**Appendix 7:** *'Georgina Bowman's Paper on the Christ Church Trusts'* (May 1993)

A key element in the sensemaking process at Christ Church was the conflicting stories told about Christ Church's origins and the various interpretations given of the original trust deed. The question of patronage is highlighted as a contentious issue by the Church Commissioners in **Appendix 10** and I discuss the importance of this paper in Section 3 (**3.2.1**) when I consider Christ Church's 'counterstory' to the 'story' being told by the Archdeacon of Bath

**Appendix 8:** *Legal Opinion from the Chancellor of the Diocese* (May 1995)

In terms of Roe's description of 'story' and 'counterstory', the controversy over the patronage Church (which was a major source of tension regarding the team scheme (**3.2.2**)) was not resolved until 1995. Then the Chancellor of the Diocese gave a legal opinion, which favoured Christ Church's 'counterstory'. In the context of the history of this matter, this is a crucial judgement because it resolves an important element of the dispute that has been going throughout the last two hundred years over who has responsibility for appointing the minister at Christ Church (**3.4**).

**Appendix 9:** *'Christ Church Council Standing Committee Paper'* (January 1992)

As I state in the main text of this thesis, my research project began as an enquiry into the organizational status of Christ Church. This was the first paper that the Church Council had to consider after I had been invited to take the Chair. Its significance is two-fold: First, it shows that the idea of developing the Anglican link with the University Chaplaincy was on the church's agenda even before the team scheme with Walcot Parish was rejected. Second, it shows the diversity of other ideas which were being explored at this time thus indicating why I continued to work with the body metaphor as a means of addressing this pluralism.

**Appendix 10:** *'Church Commissioners Response to the Pastoral Scheme'* (April 1992)

The letter from the Church Commissioners to the Bishop of Bath & Wells gives independent confirmation of the statement that I make at the start of Section 3 regarding the divisiveness of the team scheme proposals. In addition, it indicates the longstanding nature of some of these difficulties and was an important spur to finding a detailed historical context for my sensemaking at Christ Church set out in **3.4**.



**Appendix 11:** *'Report of the Standing Committee to the Church Council on the Future of the Ministry at Christ Church'* (January 1993)

The report produced by the Standing Committee of Christ Church one year on from Appendix 5 is much clearer about the way forward for the church. Furthermore it begins to prepare the ground for developing an Anglican link with the Chaplaincy by making a firm proposal about an administrative assistant who will work both with Christ Church and the Chaplaincy, which is considered in Section 3 (3.5.4).

**Appendix 12:** *'Signposts'* (June 1993)

In Section 2 (2.6) I outline some of the practical responses the Chaplaincy made to meet the diversity of needs in higher education ministry. These included a weekly newsletter (**Appendix 14**) and 'Signposts' which were "a series of occasional papers produced by the Chaplaincy Centre" bringing "articles from journals and magazines in the Chaplaincy to the attention of the wider University community".

**Appendix 13:** *'The Richness of the Gospel'* (A talk to the University of Bath Christian Union on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1994)

This was the first of two talks that I gave at the main meetings of the Christian Union having signed the Doctrinal Basis. Interestingly, during this period my Baptist colleague was also invited to speak to the Christian Union at Bath College of Higher Education and asked to sign a similar declaration. He accepted the invitation but declined to sign the basis, arguing that such credal statements were not part of his Church's tradition. In neither instance did speaking at a CU meeting lead to a breakthrough in terms of working together, although it did contribute towards a reasonably positive relationship between Chaplaincy and Christian Union.

**Appendix 14:** *'Just A Thought ... '* (from *Spike* — *Issue 211* December 1995)

One of the ways in which I, as University Chaplain, was able to relate to the whole student body was through the articles written for *Spike*, the student magazine. This was usually produced five or six times during the academic year. The reflection reproduced in this appendix focuses on the embodied nature of human existence and, in particular, considers the narrative dialectic at the heart of Christianity which arises from the story of the Fall. On the one hand there are those who believe that all matter and all things pertaining to the body must be treated with suspicion, while on the other

hand there are those who see the material world as created by God and therefore essentially good.

**Appendix 15:** *My Body — A Poetic Response to Dali's "Last Supper"*

In Section 5 (5.3.2 iv) I discuss the print of Salvador Dali's *Last Supper* which hung in the University of Bath Chaplaincy Centre throughout my time there. This poetic response to that painting reflects a number of embodied aspects of sensemaking in respect to Jesus' ministry and Christianity which are summed up for me in Dali's work.

# Appendix 1: The Journey

Vaughan Roberts

(published in **Together**, No 346, October 1989)

*The story of Abraham's journey to make the sacrifice is one of the most challenging to contemporary notions of parenthood. This story does not try and reconcile the sharp difference between then and now but, rather, is an attempt to see some of those events through the eyes of Isaac and understand what effect they may have had upon subsequent generations.*

The scorching, sand-laden wind tugged and ripped at the long, black tent, trying to wrench up its ropes and expose the huddled occupants to its merciless pummelling. Inside the living compartment a fit and healthy looking man in his forties was sitting with his two young sons on his knees. The younger son, sharp and lively, obviously disliked being contained in the tent by the annual ferocity of the Sirocco wind. The older boy, with his jet black hair and weather-beaten face, looked more used to the outdoor life. He seemed to take the wind more as a fact of life and was therefore stoically resigned to the temporary restrictions on movement. Esau turned to his father and said, "Tell us again about the time Grandfather Abraham took you up the mountain when *you* were young." Jacob glanced up quickly as Isaac looked fondly at his eldest son and grunted in agreement to the request.

Isaac's deep voice battled against the higher-pitched roar of the wind: "It all started on a day I shall *never* forget," he said. "Things had become so boring around the camp. Ishmael had gone, you see. He wasn't only my half-brother, he was my best friend. But then suddenly ... one night he and Hagar his mother just left and no one would really tell me why. Abraham said they'd decided to go and live with some relatives in Egypt, and that it was 'all for the best' but I was sure Ishmael wouldn't just go off like that without a word. He had promised me his best sling when he was given his new one but that had gone as well. I was so fed up. Sarah refused to talk about Hagar and Ishmael at all, and it was so dull without him around." Isaac grinned. "I remember the time we caught a snake and hid it under the mat in that part of the tent over there – where the cooking is done. One of the servants was bringing in some freshly-baked

bread and trod on it. The loaves went everywhere!” Isaac paused as he remembered and then smiled ruefully. “We were hauled up before Abraham for that one,” and he rubbed his bottom, “but it was worth it. Those sort of things always were ... when Ishmael was around.”

“After he left there was nothing to do and no one to play with, except Ruth of course. She was the daughter of one of the shepherds. She did come and ask me to play but boys should be learning to handle knives and axes and slings; learning how to ride; and learning the ways of the shepherd. Dressing up and pretending to be someone else was not for Isaac, the son of Abraham.” He paused again and looked at Esau. “I longed to go out into the pasture with the men and help with the sheep but they were always saying ‘you are too young’ or ‘when you are a bit older, perhaps’. Even old Jorash, the head shepherd, used to say: ‘One day soon you can come and help.’ But I did like him though. He had one of those faces that folded along the lines when he smiled. His eyes looked so bright against his brown skin – you don’t find people as good as him any more.”

Isaac leant back and tilted his head upwards. Esau and Jacob knew this was the signal for a digression. “He once brought me a long thin tube that he had obviously spent a lot of time carving, while out looking after the sheep. Jorash put it to his mouth and played me a tune. It was a few years before I learnt to wield a knife but in the meantime I became a dab hand at playing the whistle.”

Isaac returned to his main theme: “The days certainly dragged by that summer. There had not been as much rain as usual during March and April so the summer drought hit us harder than ever. That meant extra work for the shepherds to find the grazing for the sheep. I think Abraham was getting worried at one stage. We were waiting for the Sirocco then you see. People were on edge and tempers were short. It’s always been my least favourite time of the year. Anyway, as I said, I was bored. So when Abraham came to me and said, ‘Get an early night Isaac, we’re going on a long journey tomorrow’ I was really excited. I wanted to know where we were going but he was non-committal. ‘You will have to wait and see’ was all that he offered in response to my questions. It was his most taciturn voice and I knew there was no point in pushing him. Anyway, I was up really early next morning and one of the

servants who was coming with us had learnt that we were going to the land of the Amonites so at least we weren't going through hostile country. I was a bit worried about Grandfather Abraham though because it didn't look as if he had managed to get any sleep at all but I wasn't going to let it bother me – after all this was an *adventure*.

“So I gathered up my whistle and a spare garment and made my way to where the ass was tethered. The servants were just finishing the packing. Most of the food had already been put into saddlebags – the lightly roasted fresh ears of corn, bread, cakes of dried figs, pomegranates, vegetables and garlic. They just had to strap the goatskin bottle of sour milk on and we were ready.” Isaac knew he had come to a natural break in the story. He peered through the gloom at his two sons with a grim look on his face. “I was really excited about going on that journey and must have talked non-stop for the first couple of hours, but Grandfather Abraham hardly said a word. He obviously didn't want to talk. Eventually his silence and the heat of the sun got to me too and for the rest of the time we travelled in silence. Every now and again I would try a question: ‘Where are we going?’ or ‘What are we going for?’ but no one would tell me. Once, when we stopped, the servant said he thought we were going to make some sort of sacrifice but I thought that was unlikely since it wasn't the right time of the year and we had not brought an animal with us.”

Isaac paused again. Esau and Jacob knew from experience this was the part of the story that their father found the hardest. In a sudden burst of emotion Isaac exclaimed: “Do you know ... he never told me! Even when he was building the altar! Even when he was *tying me up*! He never told me and he never looked me in the eye.” Esau and Jacob looked away, unsure of what to say. The sound of the wind seemed to fill the tent and the drumming of the sand on the woollen material sounded like thunder rolling around outside. Isaac let out a deep breath: “And then it was over. There was a sudden bleating and a ram was caught by its horns in a thicket. I don't know who was more relieved – him or me – but I do know that I've never seen anyone *look* more relieved than Grandfather Abraham at that moment.” Isaac looked at his two sons: “He did love me, you know. He would have done anything for me. But do you know what really hurts? It was that he didn't tell me and he wasn't honest with me.” Isaac looked at Esau and then at Jacob. “I can forgive anything,” he said, “...except *dishonesty*.” Esau the older sibling and possessor of the birthright looked

deep into his father's eyes while Jacob the younger looked away and watched the swirling patterns the wind was making with the sand.

## Appendix 2:

### *Umberto Eco and the “Habit” of Family Communion*

Vaughan Roberts

(published in **The Modern Churchman**, New Series 31 (2): 10-15)

The Church of England is in crisis. The question is ... which one? Doctrinal, financial, moral, ecclesiological, or perhaps there's something new? *If* the headlines are any guide then the Church seems to be constantly veering away from one precipice only to find itself perched precariously over another. Its imminent fragmentation has been predicted as a consequence of everything from theological revisionism to women priests to the advent of AIDS.

At this point some comments by Umberto Eco, Professor of Semiotics at the University of Bologna, novelist and columnist, might put things into some kind of perspective. Reviewing the history of the crisis of reason he wonders whether the problems are not so much with the concept of *reason*, as with the concept of crisis. After all, "Crisis sells well. During the last few decades we have witnessed the sale (on news-stands, in bookshops, by subscriptions, door-to-door) of the crisis of religion, of Marxism, of representation, the sign, philosophy, Freudianism, presence, the subject (I omit other crises that I don't understand professionally even if I endure them, such as that of the lira, of housing, the family institutions, oil)."<sup>1</sup> So is it that the Church of England merely finds itself subject to market forces, and the product that is selling well at the moment is crisis? But are there any actual *positive* signs to suggest that the Church is not in terminal decline? There is one Christian tradition in particular which is growing in this country. The evangelical wing of the Church of England and other evangelical groups, like the House Fellowships, are experiencing an increase in numbers. How is it that *they* are able to flow against the tide?

Conventional wisdom argues that people have deserted the traditional Anglican parish church in favour of these eclectic congregations because they are offering "certainties

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<sup>1</sup> Umberto Eco, "On the Crisis of the Crisis of Reason" in *Travels in Hyperreality*, Picador, 1987, p. 126.

in an uncertain world"; the sort of certainties that the Church of England has reneged upon. It is a common view, but it can be challenged and further comments from Eco will be the catalyst for much of this article. First however, we have to recognise the enormous change that has taken place at parish level on Sunday mornings. The pattern now in many traditional Anglican churches is for the Parish Eucharist to form the focus of both the day's and the week's worship. Whatever the liturgical and theological strengths of this development, it now means that at the heart of parish life is a service of *exclusion* as opposed to *welcome*. To take part fully in worship, you have to be a member of the "club". The act of taking, or of not taking communion, marks out two distinct classes of people. There are strong echoes of this in both the Tiller report on the Church's ministry, where the notion of Church of England becoming a thoroughly "associational" church and eucharistic sect" is discussed;<sup>2</sup> and in the report on admitting children to communion before confirmation.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, the more equitable and open service of Evensong has tended to limp along, if it hasn't already been amputated, like Mattins.

To be fair, this process of exclusion has not gone totally unrecognised. Many churches, not necessarily of evangelical tradition, have institute, experimented with "family" services. This is often a non-eucharistic alternative, perhaps as the main service on the first Sunday of the month. As Kenneth Stevenson notes, these services are aimed at 'fringers' - those who are possibly less committed and those who are not confirmed.<sup>4</sup> But here we have a prime example of a serious problem which affects the Church of England at many levels. Eco talks about the confusion caused by our "codes of communication" and in his example he notes how the phrase 'no more' can be understood in completely different ways by those interpreting with English-language code and by those interpreting with the Italian-language code.<sup>5</sup> It is possible to see the same problem occurring in the Church, at a more significant level, even

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<sup>2</sup> J. Tiller, *A Strategy for the Church's Ministry*, CIO, 1983, p.61.

<sup>3</sup> cf. "A quite young child is capable of perceiving, both the naturalness and the 'specialness' of sharing in the bread and wine ... A child can also feel a sense of exclusion from some which is obviously of importance to adults and which binds them together, leaving her or him out, and seeming to deny his or her awareness of love and belonging." *Communion before Confirmation*, CIO, 1985, pp. 27-28.

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth Stevenson, *Family Services*, Alcuin Club Manual No. 3, SPCK, 1981, p.2.

<sup>5</sup> Eco, "Towards a Semiological Guerrilla Warfare", in *op. cit.*, pp. 135-144.



when the *same* language code is being used. Michael Perham has drawn attention to the difficulties over the use of word 'family':

The Eucharist is *the* family worship and is often advertised as *Family* Eucharist or Family Communion. The term can be misunderstood ... because people think it is *for families* and can be quite insensitive when it seems to be catering for them alone. Many loyal Churchgoers are single people, some are widows, quite a number come along with difficulty leaving behind other members of their family ... If the word family is to be used about the Eucharist, it must only be as part of a constant education about the fact that it is Eucharist *of the family*, that is of the Ch congregation, rather than a Eucharist *for families*.<sup>6</sup>

His conclusion seems optimistic. The word 'family' is so fraught with pitfalls that there is a very good case for abandoning it altogether. There is far much room for misunderstanding in the code-word. In addition to examples mentioned, the word can also cause feelings of rejection for one parent families. The highly ambiguous nature of the term can mean nobody is sure whether families are meant to be there or not. So, the main act of worship in the traditional parish is a service of exclusion, but even when there is more open worship, it is not at all clear from the signals, who the service is for.

A further problem has a good deal to do with what might be called Cultural context'. The eucharist in many Anglican Churches is still, by large, a 'serious' event; something of a performance. 'Serious' events are approached in a particular way. Again, as Eco notes, one of the characteristics of the 'serious' cultural event is that the audience must not participate. It sits and listens or watches; in this sense a spectacle can become 'serious' when the public takes no active part but simply attends passively. So it is possible that the audience of Greek comedy watched while spitting out fruit pips and taunting the actors; but today, in a dutifully archeologized amphitheatre, the same comedy is more cultural entertainment and people keep quiet.<sup>7</sup> There is a striking similarity between that statement and a comment on Anglican

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<sup>6</sup> Michael Perham, *Liturgy Pastoral and Parochial*, SPCK, 1984, p.40.

<sup>7</sup> Eco, "Culture as Show Business", in *op. cit.*, pp. 151-57.

liturgy from the report *To A Rebellious House?* quoted recently by Bryan Spinks: "The Liturgy of The Church of England, does not speak to the people, it seems to be a formality, words, ceremony and music, and it is very sophisticated. The congregation feels a bit like a theatre audience, watching a performance."<sup>8</sup> In just the same way that there are different ways of experiencing what Eco calls the 'cultural debate', so there are different ways of experiencing Christian worship. But traditional worship in the Church of England has become locked into a narrow band based on a performance approach. It caters very well for people who listen to Radio 3, but lacks the wider appeal that the evangelical churches have tapped into.

This confusion over communication codes can be extended to the liturgical code and pattern of worship in many churches. While the ASB has made external alterations to the eucharist (everyone now says "we" instead of "I"; the president faces 'the people' instead of 'God'; everyone is invited to share the peace), in practice these changes have *remained* external because they require such a radical change in outlook that many have felt unwilling, or unable, to make. What has happened is that a service which places prime importance on an individual's relationship with God, has been replaced by one in which the focus of attention has been translated from the vertical to the horizontal. The emphasis is now on the community and the presence of God mediated in and through that community. The fact that the Church of England appears to be in a period of corporate schizophrenia is fundamental to its failure to reach out to other people. On the one hand, many of those attending church Sunday by Sunday are still, in themselves, worshipping along 'individual' lines, whereas the service itself is calling for a different approach. On the other, there are those who have been brought up worshipping along 'community' lines and who feel frustrated by this (from their point of view) constricting attitude to worship. The result is that *both* parties feel that their needs are not being met fully in one parish eucharist; meanwhile the Church is failing to resolve the conflicting signals.

However, another aspect arising from this confusion has received less attention. There are now families who have strong links with the Church of England and who have grown up with both the new services and the idea that weekly attendance at the

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<sup>8</sup> Bryan Spinks, "Liturgical Stocktaking", *Theology*, Vol. XC, Jan. 1987, p.34.

parish eucharist is the desirable norm. Yet this group is often squeezed out of worship because of the pressure of the performance and the contradictory codes. Crying children and disruptive toddlers are far too intrusive on the 'serious' event which is dramatically re-enacted each week in many parish churches. So we return to the problem of exclusion. Not only is the Church of England not attracting young families on the fringe, it is, in places, turning its own families away. All of which is thrown into sharper relief, by some recent comments by Robin Green. He discusses studies in the Wandsworth and Merton deaneries, in South London, aimed at discovering the routes by which new Christians have come to active faith. These have revealed that: "the largest group (in each case over 50%) had come to faith through ministry given at a major turning point e.g. the birth of a child, bereavement, divorce, etc. Events like evangelistic campaigns or special services were quite insignificant compared with that group".<sup>9</sup> This strengthens the idea that more open services for parents with babies and young children could be a major asset in Church growth. However, such services run against the grain of much of the worship that is now taking place in many of our churches. But it doesn't stop there.

There is an urgent need to abandon the notion of the parish worshipping together at one service, as *one* large family. Wesley Carr, in particular, has some serious criticism of using the family as a model for parish life. When that happens, he argues, "Family services and similar attempts to express the theme of the Church as a family will proliferate, but without much thought being given to this in relation to the Church's task".<sup>10</sup> The image of the family can be narrow in its appeal and in its application, as we have seen. But it also has serious implications for those in their adolescent years and early twenties who are busy establishing their identity independently of their family. If the Church is using the family as its principal model for worship, it is hardly surprising that it's not attracting those who are still, at best, in transition, or even in tension with their own familial relationships.

If parishes do give up this model for their worship, then there is another much more biblical one waiting to take its place. We need to return to Paul's model of the Church

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<sup>9</sup> Robin Green, *Only Connect*, DLT, 1987, p.65, n.9.

<sup>10</sup> Wesley Carr, *The Priestlike Task*, SPCK, 1985, p.63.

being the *body* of Christ, where the parts are different, with different needs and functions - yet part of the whole. Again, it is possible to extend this model with the help of Umberto Eco. In his reflections on how the interior life is affected by exterior clothing, he advocates strongly in favour of the monk's habit: "Monks were rich in interior life and very dirty, because,, the body, protected by a habit that, ennobling it, released it, was free to thin and forget about itself".<sup>11</sup> Liturgy in the parishes needs to break out of the family eucharist corset that it now wears. Like the monk's habit worship needs to be flexible and meet several needs, while maintaining a simplicity and unity. The habit relieves the parts of the body from unnecessary constriction and allows greater freedom for all.

Paul's image of the Church as a 'body' recognized that Christianity is not homogeneous collection of people who all look the same, act the same and feel the same. Churches are composed of individuals and groups who have divers needs and outlooks. Undoubtedly this has always been the case. There was, as James Dunn comments, "a marked degree of diversity within first century Christianity. We can no longer doubt that there are many different expressions of Christianity within the New Testament".<sup>12</sup> The tensions born of the need to recognize diversity and maintain group unity remain with us from New Testament times, and lie not far beneath the surface.

In the Pauline epistles we can see Paul wrestling with these tensions and attempting to manage the conflicting pressures of diversity and unity. That experience provides a model for the Church at large and for individual parishes - both are charged with finding the means, not to *resolve* the tension because by its nature it is unresolvable, but to *make* that tension a constructive force rather than a divisive one. As Carl Dudley and Earle Hilgert have recently argued in their perceptive book *New Testament Tensions and The Contemporary Church*:

A local church fussing with building plans or arguing over the expansion of their community ministry finds unity not despite the expression of their differences but

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<sup>11</sup> Eco, "Lumbar Thought", in *op cit.*, pp. 191-195.

<sup>12</sup> J. D. G. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament*, Westminster, 1977, p.372

because their cause is large enough to embrace their diversity. Many contemporary churches would suppress such conflict. In certain experiences of the early Church we see a more constructive use of conflict through a process characterized by open communication, mutual respect, coherence with the Church's mission and celebration of the Holy Spirit.<sup>13</sup>

There are strong parallels here with the place of worship in the life of a congregation. If the Church of England continues to use the model of the parish as a *one* large happy family, it will build up problems for the future because there is no place for individuals and groups to acknowledge and own their differences. The Church *must* recognize the diverse needs of the people of God.

To return to Echo's picture of the monk's habit, the basic materials for making a widely embracing parish liturgical habit are to hand in the services available both new and traditional. The parish should not be seen as just worshipping at one main service on a Sunday, but over a range of services. There will be those who need a quiet reflective service, those who need a formal "performance" style of worship, others who want to worship God in a much more informal setting. Those who form the "fringe" of the body of Christ are as vital to its life as those who are at the eucharistic centre. The Book of Common Prayer and the Alternative Services Book can actually meet the needs for diversity and unity. They can be used in a very straightforward way, but with thought and planning they can also be imaginatively - as illustrated by the large *Church Family Worship* resource book<sup>14</sup> and the new small service leaflet *Come and Worship*.<sup>15</sup> The materials are to hand - the challenge is for each Church to become a garment maker.

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<sup>13</sup> Carl S. Dudley and Earle Hilgert, *New Testament Tensions and The Contemporary Church* Fortress, 1987, p.131.

<sup>14</sup> ed. Michael Perry, *Church Family Worship*, Hodder and Stoughton, 1986.

<sup>15</sup> *Come and Worship*, compiled by Leslie Francis, Mowbrays, 1987. See also Leslie Francis "Family Services" in ed. Leslie Francis, *Making Contact*, Collins, 1986, pp.32-40.

## Appendix 3: Future Role of University Chaplain

*In researching this section I came across an alternative view of the work of the University Chaplain at the University of Bath which written by my predecessor Francis Buxton to the Bishop of Bath and Wells and dated June 23 1986. It is in his own handwriting and headed "Outline of my work" and states his understanding of the role of chaplain at the University. Interestingly he uses the title "Anglican" chaplain:*

### **The Anglican Chaplain's Present and Future Role**

1. Our team of Chaplains is soon to prepare a paper suggesting that any future appointment at Bath University should be open to an ordained person of any of the member churches of the WCC [World Council of Churches]. This would have difficult implications for funding, we realise, but there are precedents elsewhere, and I am in correspondence with Kennedy Thom of the Board of Education about this before we prepare our paper. So, far as we are concerned, what follows relates to the Full-time chaplain, not necessarily Anglican.
2. The chaplain is in a broad sense an educationist, a teacher of the implications of the Christian faith for the life of the student or staff-member ... in practice this happens in the staff/postgrad. discussion group, special meetings on topical issues, One World Week events, sermons, personal conversations, etc.
3. (S)he is also a teacher, more narrowly, of the content of the Christian faith ... in practice, eg the 'Pilgrims' group for exploration of Christian faith.
4. (S)he is a friend and counsellor, one of an informal team which includes medical staff and University counsellor, available to anyone who wish to talk and share and work through crises or decision-making. It is a great advantage that the Chaplain lives on campus and is around for many aspects of the University's life, not tied to the chapel or limited by office hours (though personal leisure and family life can be vulnerable to 24-hour availability) ... in practice, availability in the Chaplaincy office, visits to the sick bay, presence elsewhere.
5. Member of the ecumenical team of chaplains (at present 7), working many more hours at the University task than the others, but definitely sharing responsibility

with them and with members of the Chaplaincy Management Committee ... in practice, the monthly Chaplains' meeting.

6. A Christian friend on campus, visible in refectories, bars, and various social activities, particularly those of her/his own interest (mine have included drama, music, swimming and world development), leading to contacts which can develop further ... in practice, membership of the Boey Lin Koh Trust (for development education), BUP (staff drama), Chamber Choir, staff swimming group.
7. A critical listener to the state of affairs within the University, Higher Ed, and society, helping staff and students to articulate their participation in this, supporting them in difficulty, and offering a Christian framework within which to respond ... in practice, a staff/student working party about a Christian response to Government cuts.
8. Not so much a leader of a coherent Christian community, as one who tries to keep in touch with the whole range of human needs and comings-together, and to name the action of Christ in them ... in practice, a 'Ring of Hands' round the pedestrian parade, a Students Union 'Keep Thy' campaign, a Communist Society day conference, a new SCM [Student Christian Movement] group, etc.
9. A priest/minister doing much that would be familiar to a vicar: conducting worship, visiting the sick, arranging meetings, publicising events, office work, correspondence, the reading of journals and books.
10. The Anglican chaplain encourages an Anglican student group and gives opportunities to experience Anglican worship and spirituality ... in practice, the 'Ceplus' group and weekends at Wick Court.
11. (S)he relates to the wider Anglican and ecumenical church and invites church members and groups to visit the University chaplaincy ... in practice, Deanery and Diocesan synods, Bath Council of Churches, World Development Movement, local Christian Peace Group.

## Appendix 4: The UCCF Doctrinal Basis

"The doctrinal basis of the Fellowship shall be the fundamental truths of Christianity, as revealed in Holy Scripture, including:

1. The unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the Godhead;
2. The sovereignty of God in creation, revelation and final judgement;
3. The divine inspiration and infallibility of Holy Scripture as originally given, and its supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct;
4. The universal sinfulness and guilt of human nature since the fall, rendering man subject to God's wrath and condemnation;
5. The full deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God; his virgin birth and his real and sinless humanity; his death on the cross, his bodily resurrection and his present reign in heaven and earth;
6. Redemption from the guilt, penalty and power of sin only through the sacrificial death once and for all time of our representative and substitute, Jesus Christ, the only mediator between God and man;
7. Justification as God's act of undeserved mercy, in which the sinner is pardoned all his sins, and accepted as righteous in God's sight, only because of the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, this justification being received by faith alone;
8. The need for the Holy Spirit to make the work of Christ effective to the individual sinner, granting him repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ;
9. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit in all those thus regenerated, producing in them an increasing likeness to Christ in character and behaviour, and empowering them for their witness in the world;
10. The one holy and universal Church, which is the Body of Christ, and to which all true believers belong;
11. The future personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge all men, executing God's just condemnation on the impenitent and receiving the redeemed to eternal glory."

(from *Evangelical Belief A Short Explanation of the Doctrinal Basis of the UCCF*, Leicester, IVP, 1988: 11-12)



# Appendix 5: The Early Historical Documents of Christ Church

## **A) The Original Prospectus (Undated)**

THE Want of general Accommodation for the Performance of the publick services of Religion, together with the evil consequences to be apprehended from the Bulk of the Community being deprived of the Labours of the Parochial Ministry, must to those who are well affected to our happy Establishment, be a matter of serious Consideration. That this is the case in the Parish of WALCOT, is notorious to all who are the least acquainted with it; and the continued Increase of its Buildings recommends the present subject to immediate attention. But it would be an affront, not less to the understanding than to the liberality of those to whom this is addressed, to say more upon the present occasion than what may be sufficient to inform them, for the more general accommodation of its Inhabitants, and of the POOR in particular; who are now alas! shut out from almost every place of public worship belonging to the Established Church.

The Chapel is proposed to be built in a central a spot as can be procured, upon a scale sufficiently extensive to contain Two Thousand People. The whole area of the Building, which is calculated to hold from Twelve to Fifteen Hundred, will be benched, for the free accommodation of all the Poor who may be disposed to attend the Service. The Galleries round may contain fittings for about six hundred; the greater part of which are designed for the accommodation of persons in a middle rank of life; and are proposed to be let at so low a price as will sufficient to defray the salaries of the Ministers, and the other necessary expenses. It is proposed, that there shall be full Service both Morning and Afternoon, and Sacrament once a Month.

A proposal for a Chapel, to be built upon so extensive and liberal a plan as to require at least Three Thousand Pounds to carry it into compleat effect, - a proposal, which has not only been approved, but has moreover received the strongest assurance of countenance from the Bishop of the Diocese, cannot fail to recommend itself to those

who are in a situation to promote an undertaking which has the Honour of GOD, and the Welfare of our Fellow-Creatures, for its object.

Such persons, therefore, as feel themselves disposed to this undertaking, and may wish to receive more particular information upon it, will be so good to apply to any one of the following Gentlemen, who will with pleasure shew them a list of sums already set down for the purpose of carrying the above plan into execution, and thankfully receive any addition to it, which they may think proper to make.

Rev. J. Sibley, Queen's Parade

Rev. Dr. Sumner, Walcot Parade

Rev. Charles Daubeny, Royal Crescent

Rev. William Leigh, Marlborough-Buildings

George Westcott, Esq; Ditto

George Ramsay, Esq; Ditto

## **B) Prospectus No 2 (Undated Circular Letter)**

THE Gentlemen engaged in carrying into effect the Plan for a FREE CHURCH, for the general use of the Inhabitants of Bath, but more particularly of the Poor, feel themselves happy in having it in their power to inform the Promoters of so Charitable an undertaking, that they have at length succeeded in securing a most eligible spot of Ground, for the intended Building. Flattering themselves that they shall be given credit for having paid unremitting attention to the object which they profess to have at heart, and in consequence judging it necessary to give a detail of the several fruitless negotiations in which they have been concerned, during the course of this business, they proceed to state briefly to the Subscribers, and the Public at large, the particulars of that transaction, the event of which, they trust, will enable them to bring a laudable design to a speedy and effectual accomplishment. The Lease of the Ground, upon which the intended CHURCH is to stand, the Gentlemen have purchased of the present Tenant at the price of 300l. To render this purchase more compleat, and to mark at the same time his approbation of the purpose, for which it has been made,

LORD RIVERS, in whom the Fee of the Ground is vested, has, in a very obliging and handsome manner, made a free grant of his remaining interest in it. By this liberal indulgence of his Lordship, the CHURCH will stand, as a building of that nature ought to do, upon *free Ground*. But as the sum originally proposed to be expended on the Building was 3,000l. a sum barely adequate, perhaps, to the extent of the undertaking; and as the Subscriptions already received, fall short of that Sum; it is presumed, that this consideration, coupled with that of 300l. having been actually expended in the purchase of Ground, (a circumstance not as yet taken into the account;) will induce all, who wish to contribute to so *necessary* and *truly Christian* an undertaking, to come forward, at this time, with their assistance. In this confidence, the Gentlemen, being determined that an object of such importance should meet with no unnecessary delay through them, propose to carry their trust into immediate execution; not doubting, but that, by the liberality of those, who feel themselves attached to the cause they have in view to promote, namely, the *Honour* of GOD, and the *Welfare* of the COMMUNITY; they shall be enabled to fulfil, with advantage to the Public, and satisfaction to themselves, that engagement which they are upon the point of entering into, upon the present occasion.

Rev. J Sibley, *Queen's-Parade*

Rev. Dr. Sumner, *Walcot-Parade*

Rev. C. Daubeney, *Royal Crescent*

Rev. Wm. Leigh,

Rev Martin S Smith, *Prior Park*

Geo. Ramsay, Esq. *Marlborough Buildings*

### **C) The 1801 Trust Deed**

Know all men by these presents that whereas, by the great increase of inhabitants in the city of Bath, sufficient accommodation was not provided for the lower order of people to attend divine service according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church of England, We, Humphrey Sumner DD Provost of King's College Cambridge John Sibley, Rector of Walcot, in the city of Bath, Charles Daubeney, Vicar of North Bradley in the County of Wilts, William Leigh Rector of Little Plumstead, in the

County of Norfolk, & Martin Stafford Smith, Rector of Fladbury in the County of Worcestershire, opened a voluntary subscription to build a church or chapel on the following plan, viz: That the whole area of the building below, should be benches opened for the free use of all such persons as might wish to attend divine service. - that the galleries should be let at a price sufficient to keep the building in repair & pay the officiating ministers, clerk and sexton, & other necessary outgoings. - that the building when finished should be vested in a respectable trust, to preserve the uses of the same for ever in the most effectual manner. That the trustees for the above purpose should be the Lord Bishop of the Diocese, the Archdeacon of Bath, the Patron and Rector of Walcot, all for the time being, together with the Rev Dr Sumner, the Rev Charles Daubeney, the Rev William Leigh, the Rev Martin Stafford Smith, and all other subscribers of fifty pounds and upwards, that every vacancy in the trustees should be filled up by the survivors. - That a sub-committee should be chosen by the trustees from among themselves, to superintend the building when finished, to receive the rents of the galleries, discharge the salaries, and all other necessary outgoings, and to guard against any abuse of the charitable plan, upon which the said building is proposed to be erected. - Now , we, the aforementioned Humphrey Sumner, John Sibley, Charles Daubeney, William Leigh and Martin Stafford Smith, having received a sum of money, by voluntary contribution & erected a large and commodious building for the above purpose. - The Lord Bishop of the Diocese having consecrated the same. - and the Rector of the Parish having nominated two officiating ministers to perform the following duty, viz to read prayers and preach a sermon, on the morning and evening of every Sunday, to read prayers and administer Holy Communion on the morning of every Christmas Day and Good Friday. - and to read prayers and preach a sermon on the evenings of the same. - and also to administer the holy communion on every first Sunday in the first month, Easter Day and Whit Sunday and the Right Hon Geo Lord Rivers of Strathfield-Say, in the county of Hants: having conveyed to us in fee, the plot of ground on which the said building is erected. - Do hereby as feoffees of the said premises, admit the Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells, the Archdeacon of Bath, the Patron and Rector of Walcot, the three Treasurers of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, (considered as the representatives of one body, and as such entitled to one vote only) all for the time being together with his Grace John [Moore] Archbishop of Canterbury, her Grace Duchess Dowager of Somerset, the Rt Hon Geo Lord Rivers, the Hon Thomas

Fitzwilliam, the Hon Philip Pusey, Mrs Elizabeth Denison, Mrs Mary Barnston, Mrs Bunny, Miss Augusta Heathcote, the Rev John Wilder, the Rev John Methuen Rogers, R G Temple, George Westcott, Robert Dension, John Slade and William Wilberforce Esq as joint trustees with us, for all the purposes above mentioned, respecting the management of said church reserving nevertheless to ourselves the full power of re-entry on the said premises, if at any time hereafter, the trustees, through neglect or otherwise, should suffer any deviation from the plan here laid down. - and where as is judged advisable that the number of trustees should be hereafter limited to ten, it is hereby directed, that as often as they shall be reduced to nine, either by death, resignation or otherwise, the survivors shall elect another, at the Archdeacon's next visitation, where the accounts of receipts and disbursements of the church shall be submitted to his inspection and if the survivors shall neglect to fill up the vacancy, or vacancies, at the said next visitation, the Archdeacon is empowered to fill up the same. - at which next visitation, also the subcommittee shall be chosen and filled up under the like control. - In witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands and seals this sixth day of May in the year one thousand eight hundred and one

Humphrey Sumner

John Sibley

Charles Daubeney

W Leigh

M S Smith

# Appendix 6: The Archdeacon of Bath's Interpretation of the Trust Deed

## **The Christ Church Trust**

The publication of the Pastoral Scheme for the Team Ministry, which involved giving Christchurch the status of a Parish Church, and providing for housing and paying a Team Vicar who would have specific responsibilities for the care of Christchurch, has led me to consider the terms of the original trust and at least two anomalies which have arisen over the course of time.

The two main areas of concern which I have relate to the composition of the "Church Council", and the number and composition of the Trustee body, I am conscious of the fact that Trusteeship is an important responsibility in Statute Law, and that the new Charity Bill going through Parliament will tighten existing law. In my consideration of the Trust Deed, I have been greatly helped by a study of the minute books. These make fascinating reading, and give a unique insight in Church history in Bath over the last 200 years.

There is little doubt in my mind that the original ex-officio trustees could not have envisaged a situation in which the Church of England had its own legislative powers apart from Parliamentary initiative, and where an Archdeacon would be given a completely fresh range of Statutory duties under such legislation.

The references in the mid 19th century to variation of the Trust Deed appear to relate to acquisition of property and shares, and I can find no reference in the minutes to any variation in the Trust Deed affecting the number of Trustees, or their powers to act, or the position of the Rector of Walcot in being the patron of the church.

There was no original endowment, reliance being placed on the income from gallery pew rents (which no longer exist). The Trustees do have some income from rents and investments, but it is not sufficient to pay and house a stipendiary clergyman.

1. It is quite clear that the Trustees should be constituted as follows:

**EX OFFICIO**

**The Bishop of Bath & Wells**

**The Archdeacon of Bath**

**The Patron**

**The Rector of Walcot**

**The Treasurers of SPCK (1 vote)**

**+ 5 Nominated by the Trustees**

In 1801, I believe Lord Rivers was patron, and he gave the land for the Church. At some time in the mid 19th century the advowson of the benefice of Walcot was sold to The Trustees of Charles Simeon, and they appear to me to be successors in law to Lord Rivers, and entitled to one seat on the Trust. The SPCK was a generous donor to the original church and as so seem to be entitled to serve on the Trust.

I believe the current body of Trustees is in technical default by not having these bodies currently represented, and we should put this right as **soon as** possible.

However, this means that there should be 5 elected trustees to bring the number up to 10, and I suspect we have slightly more than that at the moment, although I imagine that Prebendary Braybrooke will resign when he takes up his new appointment.

2. It is also clear that the existing "Church Council" is not legally constituted in terms of the Trust, and the Trustees must exercise great vigilance over financial transactions that are carried out by this body. The Trust Deed clearly lays down that the management of the Church and its finances is to be in the hands of a subcommittee of Trustees, chosen from among themselves. I have not been able to find evidence of a cy-pres scheme changing this original requirement, and I feel the Trustees might have contingent personal liabilities unless the position is rectified.
3. At various periods the minutes illustrate that different generations of Trustees

were aware of the central provisions of the Trust Deed, eg: in a small subcommittee supervising building works in the late 1820's, and in the need for a meeting to elect trustees coincident with the Archdeacon's Visitation during the 1939-45 War when such visitations were suspended.

4. It is also clear, and has been accepted practice that the Rector of Walcot appoints or consents to the appointment of an officiating minister. Originally, the Trust Deed envisaged two officiating ministers, but in the middle years of the 19th century this practice was discontinued in favour of one. It should be noted that the district assigned to Christchurch when the Revd M G Colbourne was Rector of Walcot in the late 1940's was not re-assigned by subsequent Rectors, and has not been in force for many years.
5. Nevertheless, even if the current body of Trustees revive their knowledge of the Trust and endeavour to carry out their duties in accordance with the letter as well as the spirit of the Trust, I wonder whether such a Trust is still viable in terms of its original object. When the Trust was founded at the end of the 18th century, the system of pew rents ensured that the limited seating available in the parish church of St Swithin, Walcot was fully occupied.

At that time, the Parish of Walcot was reputed to be the largest parish in Bath, both in geographical extent, and density of population. The building of Christchurch was only a temporary alleviation of the problem. Before the middle years of the century, two further large Churches were erected; St Stephen's and St Saviour's, and new parishes carved out of Walcot around them. Then an additional Chapel of Ease was build (St Andrew's) within 250 yards of Christchurch. For at least forty years there has been ample accommodation available in parish churches serving the original parish of Walcot. I do not believe anyone is claiming prescriptive right in relation to pews now, and as far as I am aware no pew rents are being paid in any of these churches.

So the original worthy *raison d'etre* of the Founding Trustees has been amply met by the Church of England, and everyone residing in the area of the original parish has legal rights in one of three Anglican Parish Churches.



It would be possible for the Trustees to petition the Charity Commissioners for a piece-meal cy-pres revision of the Trust, but we should find it very difficult to argue that the original worthy object of the Trust was not being met in a variety of other ways, not least, because everyone residing in the original area of the parish of Walcot has legal rights in one of three Anglican Parish Churches.

The Trustees must therefore consider very carefully the options open to them, as it is clear that they cannot continue to work in ignorance of the provisions of the Trust Deed. There appear to be three options open:

- a) The provision of ministry and administration of the Church building under the normal legislative practise of the Church of England, which the Team Ministry Scheme would give.
- b) An application to the Charity Commissioners for a cy-pres variation of the Trust Scheme of 1801.
- c) An application to the Charity Commissioners to dissolve the Trust, and disburse the assets.

At the very least, the Trustees should seek incorporated status, as it is not possible for the ex-officio Trustees to continue in office with a potential personal financial liability. The recent plight of the governors of St Brandon's School at Clevedon demonstrates the difficulty.

**John Burgess Chairman of the Trustees**

**January 1992**

# Appendix 7: Georgina Bowman's Paper on the Christ Church Trusts

## THE CHRIST CHURCH TRUSTEES

In legal terms, the structure of Christ Church is a series of trusts.

The original part of Christ Church is built on land which was sold by Lord Rivers to five clergymen, called the Feoffees, for £300.<sup>1</sup> The Feoffees were (1) Humphrey Sumner, Provost of Kings College, Cambridge; (2) John Sibley, Rector of Walcot, Bath; (3) Charles Daubeney, Vicar of North Bradley, Wilts; (4) William Leigh, Rector of Little Plumstead, Norfolk; and (5) Martin Stafford Smith, Rector of Fladbury, Worcs. When, as here, more than one person owns a piece of land, they own it as Trustees. In the absence of a copy of the conveyance, it is not possible to identify the beneficiaries of the trust. Neither is it possible to say whether Lord Rivers reserved the patronage of the proposed church to himself. What is reasonably certain, because of the terms of the 1801 Trust Deed, is that the land was sold to the Feoffees for the purpose of having a church built on it.

The 1801 Trust Deed is the principal trust document. It was created by the Feoffees and sets out the reasons for the building of the church; it records the history of its building, consecration, and staffing; and it appoints trustees to superintend the day to day running of the church.

The 1801 Trust Deed records that, because of a great increase of inhabitants in the city of Bath, there was insufficient accommodation for the "lower order of people" to attend C of E services. The Feoffees therefore opened a voluntary subscription to build a church on the following plan:

(a) the whole ground floor area of the building shall be benched and open for the free use of all such persons as might wish to attend Divine Service;

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<sup>1</sup> this figure is taken from the original account books, as the original conveyance has not yet been found

(b) the galleries should be let at a price sufficient to keep the building in repair and pay the officiating ministers, clerk and sexton, and all other necessary outgoings;

(c) that when built, the church should be vested in a respectable trust to preserve the purpose of the church for ever in the most effectual manner;

(d) that the trustees for the purposes of (c) shall be (1) the Lord Bishop of the Diocese, (2) the Archdeacon of Bath, (3) the Patron and Rector of Walcot, (4) Humphrey Sumner, (5) Charles Daubeny, (6) William Leigh, (7) Martin Stafford Smith, and (8+) all subscribers of £50 and over; trustees (1), (2), and (3) are ex officio trustees;

(e) That every vacancy in the Trustees should be filled up by the Survivors; and

(f) that a subcommittee should be chosen by the Trustees from amongst themselves to superintend the day to day running of the church and to guard against any abuse of the charitable plan.

The 1801 Trust deed then records that the Feoffees had received a sum of money by voluntary subscription and had built a large and commodious building, that the building had been consecrated by the Lord Bishop,<sup>2</sup> that the Rector of the Parish had nominated two officiating Ministers to perform specified duties, and that the land on which the church was built had been conveyed by Lord Rivers to the Feoffees.

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<sup>2</sup> The Church was consecrated on 7 November 1798. The Declaration of Consecration records that the Feoffees were the Petitioners, that the church had been erected by voluntary subscription, and that the land for the church had been conveyed by Lord Rivers to the Petitioners. The Declaration also records that the Petitioners were Trustees for the building of the Church, and that the petition was brought on their own behalf, and on behalf of the voluntary subscribers and the lower order of inhabitants in the parish of Walcot. A Declaration of Endowment, also dated 7 November 1798, made by 4 of the 5 Feoffees (Henry Sumner is not included), states that the rents of the galleries of the church are the endowment.

The 1801 Trust Deed then appoints the ex officio trustees set out at (d) above, but appears to indicate that the Patron and Rector of Walcot were 2 different offices. The deed adds the 3 Treasurers of the SPCK as ex officio trustees, jointly having one vote. There follows a list of those subscribers of £50 and over, who are appointed as trustees.

For the future, the 1801 Trust Deed provides that, in future, the number of trustees shall be limited to 10. Vacancies shall be filled by the election, by the remaining trustees, of new trustees at the Archdeacon's visitation. Also at his visitation, the Archdeacon shall inspect the trust accounts.

### **Various Misconceptions**

#### *1. The patronage of Christ Church.*

The 1801 Trust Deed is silent as to the patronage of Christ Church. There are various possibilities:

- (a) In his conveyance of the land to the Feoffees, Lord Rivers reserved the patronage to himself. This would not have been unusual, as he was also Lord of the Manor of Walcot.
- (b) In the conveyance, the Feoffees were appointed jointly, as patron. I think this unlikely as a specific appointment, although, if the conveyance is silent, it would be reasonable to imply that the Feoffees held the patronage.
- (c) The patronage rests with the 10 Trustees, bearing in mind their duties under the trust.
- (d) The patronage rests with the diocese.

#### *2. The validity of the Church Council.*

The 1801 Trust Deed is specific that the subcommittee should be appointed by and from among the Trustees. There is no suggestion in the early deeds that there was any diversion from this. However, the Trustees Act 1925 adds to the powers of Trustees, unless the Trust Deed specifically provides to the contrary. Among the powers is one of delegation to others of the daily running of the trust, subject to the overall supervision of the Trustees. This seems to be what has happened this century at

Christ Church, although the Church Council has always included more than one Trustee.

3. *A Chapel of Ease/A Proprietary Chapel*

A Chapel of Ease is built to take the overspill of a particular church. This was not the case with the building of Christ Church, as is clear from the 1801 Trust Deed.

A Proprietary Chapel is one built by voluntary subscription. It is clear that Christ Church is a proprietary chapel, not a Chapel of Ease.

## Appendix 8: Legal Opinion from the Chancellor of the Diocese May 1995

RE: CHRIST CHURCH, BATH

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### OPINION

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Christ Church, Bath was built in the last years of the 18th Century upon a site (lying geographically within the parish of Walcot) which was conveyed by Lord Rivers to a group of feoffees. The building was consecrated in 1798. By a deed dated May 6th 1801 the feoffees appointed trustees, including the Bishop of Bath and Wells, the Archdeacon of Bath and the Rector of Walcot; these three all acted ex officio. The trust deed envisaged that the outgoings, including the cost of remunerating officiating ministers, should be paid from pew rents levied on the gallery accommodation. The ministers, initially two in number, and expressed to have been nominated by the Rector of the Parish, were to read prayers, preach sermons and administer Holy Communion on specified occasions.

It is clear from the trust deed that the status of Christ Church was from the outset that of a proprietary chapel, being owned by private persons, the feoffees, who had delegated powers of management to the trustees. The functions of the ministers were so expressed as to avoid any encroachment upon the rights of the Rector of Walcot to marriage and burial fees, and all other profits of his benefice.

With the effluxion of time the original scheme of management has undergone change. The feoffees are now extinct. The number of trustees has diminished. In 1813 the trustees decided that, in normal circumstances, on the resignation of the senior minister the junior minister should succeed him; eventually the practice arose of

appointing only one minister. The Bishop proposed in 1841 that Christ Church be made a district church under the provisions of the Church Buildings Acts. This proposal seems never to have reached fruition. Almost a century later, in 1947, the Bishop and the then Rector of Walcot entered into an agreement whereby a conventional district was to be constituted and served by the minister of Christ Church. The right to appoint the minister was vested in the Bishop under this agreement, but by a supplemental agreement dated December 19th 1955 the Bishop and Rector agreed

"... that the Rector shall from time to time after consultation with the Parochial Church Council of Christ Church choose and nominate a Minister and that the Bishop may (if he approves the Minister so chosen and nominated) license such Minister ..."

The agreements lapsed for want of renewal on the appointment of a new Rector; but it has been the experience of the present Archdeacon of Bath that for the past 20 years the Rector has appointed, or consented to the appointment of, the officiating minister of Christ Church.

The changes of practice outlined above have not materially affected the position of Christ Church as a proprietary chapel, nor has there been any significant alteration of the legal framework within which the minister is appointed and discharges his functions. This framework is to be ascertained by reference to the trust deed and the general ecclesiastical law. Crucial to an understanding of the position is the fact that the minister is not an incumbent. The right to appoint him is not a right of patronage in the strict sense. On appointment he does not acquire a freehold office, neither is the pattern of worship which he provides regulated by Canons B11 or B14.

Against this background the position of each party having an interest in the minister's appointment must be considered.

(i) The Bishop

Canon C8(2) (which reflects Canon 48 of 1604 current when the trust deed was executed enables a priest or deacon to officiate in any place only after he has received authority to do so from the bishop of the diocese. In *Hodgson -v- Dillon* (1840) 2 Curteis 380 at 392 Dr. Lushington said of proprietary chapels,

"The necessity of the times, the increase of population and want of accommodation in churches and chapels in the metropolis and other large towns gave rise to the creation of chapels of this kind, and to the licensing of ministers of the Church of England to perform duty therein. The licence granted by the bishop on such occasions emanates from his episcopal authority."

It follows that, in deciding whether to grant or withhold the necessary licence, the bishop plays a crucial part in the process of appointing a minister. The bishop's power is in essence a negative one, because it is limited to refusing a licence where he considers the candidate to be unacceptable. The bishop is not, by virtue of his episcopal authority, entitled to select a candidate.

(ii) The Rector

Canon C8(4) provides that

"No minister who has such (i.e. the bishop's) authority to exercise his ministry in any diocese shall do so therein in any place in which he has not the cure of souls without the permission of the minister having such cure..."

The minister of a proprietary chapel lacks the cure of souls, and thus for the lawful exercise of his ministry depends upon the permission of the incumbent of the parish in which the chapel is situated. As Dr. Lushington put it in *Hodgson -v- Dillon*.

"He (i.e. the bishop) could not, however, grant such a licence without the consent of the rector or vicar of the parish, for the cure of souls belongs exclusively to the rector or vicar."

Accordingly the Rector of Walcot has the power to withhold permission to officiate, with the result that a minister lacking his permission could not lawfully exercise any ministry at Christ Church. This, again, is a purely negative power, which does not enable the Rector to select a minister; *Herbert -v- Dean & Chapter of Westminster* (1721) 1 P.Wms. 773.

There is no evidence that the right to choose a minister was ever conferred upon the Rector, save for a short period after 1955 while Christ Church remained within a conventional district. His nomination of the original minister, as recorded in the trust deed, preceded the formation of the trust. Since the trust deed did not vest the right of nomination in the Rector, but on



the contrary transferred the power of management (which must necessarily have included the replacement of ministers as the occasion arose) to the trustees, the initial nomination of the ministers by him must be regarded as an isolated incident. The finding of the Bishop in 1841, that there was no evidence of the nomination being vested in the Rector, is consistent with this analysis.

The involvement of the Rector in recent appointments, as described by the Archdeacon of Bath, is explicable on the basis that the Rector was exercising his rights as a trustee, or was giving permission in accordance with Canon C8(4) and the law as exposed in *Hodgson -v- Dillon*.

(iii) The Trustees

As indicated above the general powers of management which were passed to the trustees must have included the selection of ministers. Since the trustees had to set the minister's remuneration, prescribe his duties, and specify whether his appointment was for a fixed period or terminable on notice, it is inconceivable that their functions did not extend to choosing him. This is consistent with their adoption of the principle that the junior minister should succeed the senior minister.

The trustees' choice was subject to the granting of a licence by the Bishop and the Rector giving his consent. Undoubtedly the legal niceties were overlooked because both the bishop and the Rector, in their capacity as trustees, took an active part in the process of nomination. The proper course, however, was for the trustees as a body to nominate a minister; for the Rector to signify that the minister was permitted to exercise his ministry in Christ Church; and finally for the Bishop to give the minister the necessary licence.

Unless the interested parties wish by agreement amongst themselves to devise an entirely new system of appointing the minister, the method of appointment must be consistent with their existing legal rights. Of particular importance are the following:-

- (i) the trustees' nomination of the minister;

- (ii) the involvement of the Bishop and the Rector in that process as trustees;
- (iii) the need for the Rector's permission to officiate;
- (iv) the need for the Bishop's licence.

In order to give effect to these requests the task of selection should lie with the trustees (including the Bishop and the Rector, unless they wish to renounce their trusteeship) but the trustees' choice should be subject to the Rector giving permission to officiate and the Bishop granting a licence.

Central to this solution is the composition of the board of trustees. An essential ingredient of any new scheme is the revival of the trustees as an active group involved in the management of Christ Church. The notion embodied in the trust deed that 'subscribers of fifty pounds and upwards' should qualify as trustees is obsolete. In practice, since 1955 at the latest, Christ Church has been administered by a Church Council which operates outside the scope of the Synodical Government Measure 1969 and lacks statutory authority.

It would theoretically be possible to constitute as trustees under a scheme the ex officio trustees together with the entire membership of the Church Council (Section 34 of the Trustee Act 1925 places no limit upon the number of trustees holding land for ecclesiastical purposes or acting for ecclesiastical purposes generally). Regular elections to the Church Council, with the resultant appointment and resignation of trustees, may render this straightforward course impracticable. Since Section 23 of the Trustee Act 1925 gives trustees a general power to act through agents, an alternative solution might be to create a smaller group of trustees, including representatives of the congregation. The trustees could delegate a wide range of administrative functions to the Church Council. It would be possible for the scheme to provide the Church Council with a constitution so as to relieve it of its present anomalous position.

The other matter which needs attention is the proper vesting of the freehold. It is not known to whom the freehold passed upon the death of the last surviving feoffee. Presumably the trustees have a secure title based on adverse possession, and the legal effect of consecration shields the church and its site from outside interference. The

present uncertainty ought, however, to be resolved, ideally in the manner indicated on page 2 of my Instructions.

Temple, E.C.4.

31st May 1995

# Appendix 9: Christ Church Council Standing Committee Paper (January 1992)

## **CHRIST CHURCH – FUTURE OPTIONS**

*A discussion paper for the Church Council prepared by the Standing Committee, based on submissions from working groups and individuals.*

This document lists eight possible ways forward, plus an argument for and against each suggestion and questions that the church and/or the Diocese might need to look at. **It is not an exhaustive analysis of each proposal**, it is just a start to our discussion.

### **(1) The Team Scheme**

**For:** This would give us an unspecified, but secure place within the Diocesan structure.

**Against:** The Christ Church open meeting has voted against it

**Question:** Can the scheme yet be amended to take on Christ Church's objections?

### **(2) Creation of a parish**

#### **(a) Christ Church becomes a parish church**

**For:** It would give Christ Church a regularised place within the Diocese.

**Against:** It has been suggested/tried before and never progressed very far.

#### **(b) The parish is a stage on the way to a group scheme**

**For:** It would give Christ Church equal status in the scheme

**Against:** There are strong doubts as to whether it would be possible to create a parish for Christ Church.

**Question:** Is such a process viable within Church of England legislation and structures?

- (3) **Carry on as present with various NSMs, active and retired clergy**  
**For:** Ratifies the ongoing situation  
**Against:** Does the church need a 'figurehead'?  
**Question:** Are those currently looking after the practical side of things prepared to continue?
- (4) **Pay for our own part-time stipendiary priest/deacon or church administrator**  
**For:** Security from Diocesan financial cutbacks  
**Against:** Would this leave us 'outside' the diocese  
**Question:** Would our Bishop be prepared (or be free) to enter into discussions on this, and be prepared to licence any ordained person chosen?
- (5) **An NSM appointed under the present system**  
**For:** It is a system the church is familiar with and knows to work.  
**Against:** The field of possible candidates is likely to be very small.  
**Questions:** Would the church and diocese be happy for this arrangement to continue? Is it clear who should choose an NSM? Does the Trust Deed need revision?
- (6) **Developing the University Link**
- (a) Seeking a permanent link between the University Chaplain and the Officiating Minister at Christ Church  
**For:** It would give a permanent appointment.  
**Against:** Would future Chaplains want the link?
- (b) Seeking a link for the duration of the appointment of the current Chaplain  
**For:** Secures the short term future  
**Against:** Does not secure the long term standing of Christ Church  
**Question:** How long is the current Chaplain likely to remain in post?

**(7) Part-time appointment with a diocesan sector ministry plus a part-time appointment at Christ Church**

**For:** Secure long term future for Christ Church

**Against:** Does the Diocese's present financial situation cast a shadow over the future of sector ministry?

**Questions:** Is there a likely link up in the near future for Christ Church and a sector ministry? Is Christ Church larger than the usual sort of church considered for such a proposal?

**(8) Suspension of the scheme for two years to allow Christ Church and Walcot to grow together**

**For:** The churches would be allowed time to get to know each other better

**Against:** Is two years long enough for this process?

**Question:** How is ministry maintained at Christ Church in the meantime?

# Appendix 10: Church Commissioners

## Response to the Pastoral Scheme April 1992

The Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells  
The Palace  
WELLS  
Somerset  
BA5 2PD

15 April 1992

Dear Bishop

PASTORAL MEASURE 1983  
BATH WALCOT – PROPOSED PASTORAL SCHEME

The period for making representations with regard to the draft pastoral Scheme providing for the establishment of a team ministry for this benefice has now expired. During the period we received 9 letters in favour of the proposals and 34 letters against, including a petition signed by 8 members of the Christ Church Council. I enclose copies of all the representations received together with a brief summary of the main contents of each letter. Letters from the Secretary to Christ Church Council indicate an overwhelming rejection of the proposals by both the Council and the congregation of Christ Church.

The objectors portray Christ Church as a growing, forward-looking church with a pioneering style of ministry setting the pattern for the future with its emphasis on the development of a non-stipendiary and lay ministry supported by retired clergy. Many believe that Christ Church's existing style of "People's Ministry" is more in harmony with suggestions in the recent diocesan report for developing ministry to meet

modern-day needs ("Parochial Ministry - the Future") than the team ministry proposals.

The objectors contend that Christ Church attracts members from a wide area owing to its tradition of liberal catholic churchmanship, its special ministry with its strong feeling of unity and identity, and its encouragement of fruitful links with Bath University. They are concerned that the proposals would jeopardise or destroy its special "People's Ministry" and lead to Christ Church becoming a junior partner of Walcot Parish Church dominated by the latter's evangelical tradition and the influence of team rectors chosen by a patronage board on which Simeon's Trustees would have the majority of votes.

Some objectors wish to retain the existing status quo. Others, accepting the need to resolve Christ Church's anomalous position in the parish structure, feel that meaningful local consultations should take place on alternative options. They seek to ensure that any reorganisation proposals will provide the framework which would enable Christ Church and Walcot Parish Church to operate as equal partners and wonder about the possibility of incorporating Christ Church into a group ministry. Some feel that the submission of the Bishop's proposals to the Commissioners was contrary to an alleged undertaking from the Archdeacon of Bath that a team ministry would not be imposed on Christ Church.

Finally, there is concern that the proposals fail to provide specific provision for the proposed team vicar's house or his functions in relation to Christ Church, or any provisions in respect of the proposed two parish churches for representation of the laity or district church councils.

Those members of Christ Church in favour of the proposals believe that Christ Church needs a full-time vicar and that its distinctive churchmanship would be respected by the team rector-designate, the Reverend G M Dodds. Mr Dodds and Walcot PCC feel that the proposed team ministry would encourage the churches to work together and learn from each other's richness of style and churchmanship, but do not wish to see a team ministry imposed on Christ Church.



If you wish the draft Scheme to go forward notwithstanding the adverse representations it will be necessary for it to be considered by the Commissioners' Pastoral Committee. In that event, I should be grateful to have your comments on the representations in general and on the following specific points:-

1. What were the main considerations which led the diocese to the view that a team ministry should be established in the benefice of Bath Walcot? If the present proposals are intended primarily to resolve the anomalous administrative position of Christ Church in the parish framework, can you please say what consideration has been given to alternative options and why a team ministry is thought to be the best solution? Would there be any merit in preserving the existing status quo?
2. How would you justify proceedings with the Scheme at the present time in the light of the opposition from Christ Church and the comments from the team rector-designate and Walcot PCC that they would not wish to force Christ Church into a team ministry against its will?
3. Can you comment on the allegation that the Archdeacon of Bath has given assurances that the proposed team ministry would not be imposed on Christ Church against its will?
4. In view of the complaints about the lack of meaningful local consultation please will you describe what consultation has taken place about the proposals with representatives from Christ Church. Do you consider that it has been adequate?
5. While the parish questionnaires will to some extent cover the question of the differences in churchmanship between the two churches in the parish, could you explain why the diocese wishes to proceed with a team ministry in the light of such differences?
6. What merit do you see in Christ Church's "People's Ministry", particularly in relation to the diocesan report "Parochial Ministry - the Future", and how would you respond to the concerns of those who feel that a team partnership with Walcot might adversely affect such a ministry?
7. Can you comment on the criticism that few of the preliminary steps to setting up a team ministry, as recommended in appendix 1 of the Teams and Groups Working Party Report, have been followed?

8. Are you able to give any reassurances about the future of the proposed team vicar's post in the light of concern that such a post may be one of the first to be axed as a result of clergy shortages?
9. What consideration has been given (a) to the provision of a team vicar's house, (b) the representation of the laity from the proposed two parish churches on the PCC and (c) the establishment of district church councils?
10. How would you respond to the request by Walcot PCC and the patrons, the Simeon's Trustees, that the team vicar should be chosen by the patronage board, particularly in the light of the recommendations of the Teams and Groups Working Group Report?
11. Finally, are there any other factors which you think the Commissioners should be aware of in their consideration of the representations?

I shall look forward to hearing from you in due course and meanwhile I am sending a copy of this letter to Philip Nokes with the usual parish questionnaire forms. I should just add that there is expected to be a meeting of the Commissioners' Pastoral Committee on 6 May and the Committee is not due to meet again until 1 July. Material for circulation to the May Committee would need to be in our hands by 24 April (at the latest) and material for the July Committee by 19 June.

Yours sincerely

R P Banfield

# Appendix 11: Report to the Standing Committee to the Church Council on the Future of the Ministry at Christ Church (*January 1993*)

## 1. INTRODUCTION.

It is a year since we started an interregnum with sadness at the departure of Marcus Braybrooke and some apprehension about the future at Christ Church. While we may still regret the events of that period and the early part of 1992, it seems to the Standing committee, in retrospect, that the experiences of the last year have revealed significant strengths which have enabled us to move forward with vigour even in a time of uncertainty. We see new faces in church, young families, children, developments in midweek worship and there is a feeling of liveliness and energy in fellowship.

The committee's proposal now, therefore, is that we should not seek radical change but build confidently on the foundations we have.

## 2. A PEOPLE'S MINISTRY.

A major point in our arguments against the proposed Walcot team ministry' was that Christ Church had a growing people's ministry and that we wished to develop it. The committee's suggestions, therefore, start from this point with the assumption that the laity will continue to take responsibility for much, or even most, of the life, work and worship of Christ Church. This implies the help of ordained ministers but not total dependence on them for leadership.

A scrutiny (made with the help of useful papers compiled by various members of the Church Council last year) of what is happening across the spectrum of all our church activity and worship shows that many things are flourishing in the hands of lay people; this, of course, includes participation in services but much more besides. We must not be complacent, however, or suggest that more or better could not be done. For example, at the moment a great deal of pastoral work is being undertaken by members of the congregation (as well as much by the clergy). But because people are

using their own judgment (quite rightly) about the needs they see, there is perhaps a sense that there is not an overview ensuring that we know what is being done or missed.

And so these proposals include a way of providing a structure for what is happening while continuing to encourage wide participation in pastoral work and in many activities which enrich our church life and its outreach into the local community and city.

### 3. THE ORDAINED MINISTRY AND LAY READERS.

We are particularly fortunate in the number, quality and commitment of our team of ordained ministers and lay readers. Most obviously they help plan and lead our acts of worship but they also give support, guidance and encouragement in a number of ways. The committee hopes that they will all (i.e. Ronald Broackes, Clifford Burrows, Vaughan Roberts, Cyril Selmes, Sarah Sheppard, Tom Slade and other friends among the retired clergy) stay with us and continue to work collaboratively as a team without a rigid hierarchy.

However the need for one person at the centre, in the role of officiating minister, is recognised. It is the Standing Committee's recommendation that this person should be the Reverend Vaughan Roberts. The reasons are:

1. Vaughan Roberts has in effect been fulfilling a role something like this for the past twelve months. His work, with backing of others in the team, has contributed largely to the stability we have enjoyed in a time which might have been one of regression.
2. Christ Church has long recognised the mutual benefits which derive from the University link and we believe that it would be good for both parties if this continued.
3. It is possible for Vaughan's contract at the University to be renewed for a further five years and for that period he would continue to base some of his University ministry (especially, but not only, on Sundays) at Christ Church. If we include the two years of his present contract in which he will have worked at Christ Church under the arrangement which already exists, this would mean a period of

about seven years of continuity during which our distinctive style of ministry could grow.

4. Such a team, with Vaughan as the focal point, would ensure that ordained ministers, well known to us and supported by our lay readers, will always be available for our services on Sundays and weekdays and to take weddings, funerals and special services. However we are not unaware of the potential problems, particularly of overload for a number of people (e.g. wardens as well as clergy).

In Vaughan's case in particular there will be the need to balance his work at the University with that at Christ Church and also ensure that he leaves some time for his family and recreation.

The post of Chaplain to the University is the job for which Vaughan is employed by the Diocese and nothing must detract from that-On the other hand some of his university work is already carried out at Christ Church as part of his University ministry and not as an addition to it. This genuine overlap means that he can function in two capacities without neglecting the essential needs of either. But what would become too time consuming for Vaughan, the other clergy and our church officers is the amount of administration which is inevitably generated and which traditionally is absorbed by full time stipendiary clergy. Given substantial assistance in this respect, Vaughan would be free, with the rest of the team, to devote time to the essentials of the ministry.

#### 4. AN ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT.

A central part of the Standing Committee's recommendations therefore is the appointment of a lay assistant. Attached is a draft<sup>3</sup> (for later discussion if this proposal is accepted) of the details relating to such a post. The appointee (perhaps a young person contemplating a 'career' in the church) would carry out a range of administrative and organisational tasks both at the University chaplaincy and at Christ Church.

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<sup>3</sup> The draft has not been included in this appendix.

Of course this would be a cost to Christ Church. A portion of that cost would be 'Paying back' the chaplaincy for some of Vaughan's time by relieving him of some routine work. The other portion would provide Christ Church with an employee who would provide an administrative framework in order to facilitate and enable the people's ministry as much as that of the clergy.

The committee believes we should not be daunted by the cost. Increasingly parishes with stipendiary clergy are being required to pay, through the Diocesan quota sums which are realistic in terms of stipends. Since at Christ Church we are not entitled to stipendiary post (and have said that we prefer our independent route) it would be reasonable to employ a lay worker. A glance at the quota figures for neighbouring parishes indicates that Christ Church would not be financially worse off than others if this pattern of staffing were adopted and the sums involved should be well within our ability to provide.

#### 5. THE MORE DISTANT FUTURE.

Some may wonder whether the committee is suggesting a permanent arrangement which would effectively make Christ Church the university church. Definitely not. Christ Church is and would continue to be simply one of several churches associated with the University. If this proposal is accepted Christ Church will continue to be the base where the Anglican Chaplain carries out some of his university ministry linking it with his ministry to Christ Church.

We believe we should not be too anxious about what will happen eventually Vaughan moves. Some kind of link with the University may persist. It may not. Perhaps there is a sense in which there will always be some uncertainty about the future of the ministry at Christ Church because we have chosen not to follow a more conventional path-This can, of course, be seen as an advantage because it provides the freedom to move on in whatever way people believe to be right, without the constraints of traditional structures.

It is also reasonable to assume that most Churches, in these changing times will face equal uncertainties and different patterns of ministry in the next decade. Let us go forward in faith.

## 6. OTHER OPTIONS.

Is this the only option? The preferred solutions we discussed with the Bishop last June included the University link, the appointment of a non stipendiary minister, the people's ministry and a lay administrator.

The committee's proposal here includes three of those. The one not included is the appointment of an NSM because we do not believe that is necessary. If, however, it becomes desirable at some point to create such a post, most of the other considerations in this paper would be unaffected. For example, an NSM in full time secular work would still minister within the context of a people's ministry when an administrative assistant would be needed.

## 7. CONCLUSION.

In summary, the recommendations of the Standing Committee to the Church Council are: 1. The ministry at Christ Church should be essentially a people's ministry.

2. The Reverend Vaughan Roberts should be invited to be officiating minister, working with the present team of clergy and lay readers.

3. A lay assistant should be appointed, paid by Christ Church, to undertake administration both at Christ Church and the University Chaplaincy.

## Appendix 12: excerpt from 'Signposts' (June 1993)

*Signposts was "a series of occasional papers produced by the Chaplaincy Centre" bringing "articles from journals and magazines in the Chaplaincy to the attention of the wider University community". Issue 6 (June 1993) included an article by Dr David Sims' from the School of Management (and Director of Music at Christ Church) which had been recently published in The Church Times.*

Almost everyone believes that management is done better in organisations other than their own. I once visited two companies in the same week, each of whom gave the other as an example of how management should be done, while ridiculing their own efforts. More worrying is the occasional person who really believes that they know how to manage. They always get into trouble, because if someone thinks they have cracked it they stop learning, and they are soon managing the past.

The Church is full of managers. People may be in a management role for years without labelling it as such. Management happens whether we acknowledge it or not, rather like the speaking of prose and the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Management means, rough, "working with and through other people", in contrast to doing everything yourself; put like that it must surely be a core activity for people all round the churches, and especially for the clergy.

One of the problems for clergy as managers is that they have often not been warned of the limitations of management training. They hear of brilliant-sounding solutions to problems, but don't know when or how to use these solutions. One priest I know is an enthusiast for setting up teams (a great management theme of the 1970s), but always refers to what "I" am doing with "my" teams. He has got hold of the word "team", but not of the concept of an empowered group of people, who might have different notions from his own of what should be done.



For a long time it seemed that any management idea that did not work in private industry would then be tried in the Health Service (consensus management, manpower planning, purchaser-provider split). My fear now is that the same thing may happen to the Church; it could become the last refuge for management ideas that don't work reliably anywhere else. I have recently heard proposals within church bodies, offered as "new insights from management", for Management by Objectives, Zero-Based Budgeting, and Job Evaluation.

None of these ideas is necessarily wrong, but they may have been oversold. This country is knee-deep in people who make their living teaching management techniques and "competencies", and in management consultants peddling cure-alls. Management is a young subject, and still prone to wild enthusiasms or massive generalisations like the "five elements of good management" quoted by Stephen Little. We live in a solution-hungry time, where people who are confused, busy and anxious latch on to any quick fix for management (or other) problems. Many of these fixes don't last long, even in the companies for which they are designed; there is no reason to suppose they will work any better in the Church.

What management thinking can best offer is help with the art of asking good questions. These questions are usually more applicable across different kinds of organisations than are solutions. Here are a few examples of questions which would be asked in a parish or diocese, based on some of the questions currently being asked in other organisations:

1. What are we trying to do? Is there a shared vision of how things might be? Can the different visions co-exist?
2. What are we good at? Is our church trying to be good at everything? Is there a focus on some activities and interests?
3. What issues do we discuss? What problems are taken seriously? What issues do people get excited about in Synod, in PCC, in discussion groups, and when they are chatting?

4. Have we got a structure that helps? Most work organisations have fewer layers than they used to: have we too many layers? Are there people in roles in our diocese or parish who seem to spend most of their time distracting other people from the work of the Church? If so, can we redesign the role?
5. How well is management in our organisations serving the managed? Do we have regular appraisal of people in authority by those under that authority? If some of the roles in our parish or diocesan hierarchy were removed, what would be lost?
6. How much do we learn from our failures? Can we admit them? Or do we even flaunt them?
7. Are the people who ask this sort of question regarded as a threat or an opportunity.
8. What questions would be more helpful than these to help us think about the way people work with and through each other in our situation? Are there people around who could help us form such questions? Can we write them down together? Can we write down satisfactory answers? Are we prepared to publish the results?

Mrs Thatcher said she liked ministers to bring her solutions, not problems. I suggest that for the Church (and incidentally for most other organisations) this should be reversed. If people are allowed to talk about problems together, they can participate in producing solutions. Better still, they may come to a new view of the problem, which allows new questions and enables a more productive approach. Management which demands solutions - from above or below - is oppressive. Management which shares and reshapes questions can be liberating. Good management, like truth, should make people free.

# Appendix 13: The Richness of the Gospel

## **A talk to the University of Bath Christian Union on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1994**

Let the gospel of Christ dwell among you in all its richness; teach and instruct one another with all the wisdom it gives you. With psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, sing from the heart in gratitude to God. (Col 3: 16)

A girl, who had just started secondary school and discovered the pleasure and pains of exams, had her great grandmother living in a small granny-annexe. One of her new friends often came round to visit and every time she went to her friend's house saw this woman of ancient years (the great grandmother) was reading the scriptures. Eventually, the friend could keep quiet no longer and asked: "Why is your great grandmother always reading her Bible?"

"Well," said her friend, "I think she's revising for her final exams!"

Sometimes the word "gospel" has come to be almost synonymous with the written word - which we find in the book which so absorbed that great grandmother, but for the New Testament writers especially Paul and Mark it had a much more specific meaning. Paul uses the word for the disclosure of Jesus Christ as God's Son through the resurrection, and, more widely, for the disclosure which was still ongoing by living "in Christ" - hence his reference in Col 3 to "the gospel of Christ dwelling amongst you". While for Mark the word refers to Jesus' great deeds, parables and conflicts which announce that God's Kingdom is present and calling for repentance. And it's these two elements of disclosure (or revelation) and the presence of God's Kingdom that I want to explore with you this evening.

Where is the Kingdom of God revealed in the summer term at a University like this one? Where is God in the stress and strain of student examinations? Where is the Gospel in the subject that you are studying? Now, I can't hope to answer those questions for you individually but I hope that I may be able to offer some pointers by

trying to discover the richness of the gospel in three areas: the richness of creation; the richness of worship and the richness of love.

### ***1. The Richness of Creation***

Let me start with some well-known words from the Book of Proverbs which talk about creation and the part played by wisdom in God's creative process:

The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old; I was appointed from eternity, from the beginning, before the world began. When there were no oceans, I was given birth ... I was there when he set the heavens in place, when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep ... I was the craftsman at his side. I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing in his presence, rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in humankind. (Prov 8: 22-24a; 27; 30-31)

Perhaps there are two crucial things for us now in that passage. First, As we live in an institution which dissects both the physical and human worlds without much reference to God and to ultimate values it is easy to forget that God's Wisdom is actually written into the very fabric of creation. It is true, as Paul points out, that the wisdom of God subverts the wisdom of the world but that doesn't mean that the wisdom of the world is to be regarded as worthless. Instead, it is only through the perspective provided by God's wisdom and the values of God's kingdom that we discover what is of value in the world. In ancient Israel there was a strand of religious belief amongst the people of God which affirmed the place of thought and reason. This tradition which was responsible for books like Job, Ecclesiastes and (of course!) Proverbs was also known to Jesus and Paul who drew on and tapped into the idea that our thinking and reflections can be tools for God's revelation. God's wisdom is present in the world and it's up to us to have the eyes to perceive it and the ears to hear it. Stuart Henderson gets it just about right I think in his poem Word Perfect.

If God  
had a felt-tip pen  
or perhaps a can of aerosol spray What would He write

And where would He write it?

Would He be quirky,  
like Michelangelo,  
arousing curiosity through ornate scribble on the ceiling,  
causing peering pilgrims to stand on the seats?

What eternal ponderings would be found up there  
amidst the hanging forests of the spider's swaying kingdom  
And would it be written in Hebrew?

'Moses was born in Egypt  
But Jonah comes from Wales

Goliath was a giant flop

Man love your brother  
But Cain wasn't Abel

Houses cleared, then flattened — we also provide a band,  
phone Joshua for details.

I needed a doctor, so they send me social workers, signed Job

Judas didn't need the money'

But then,  
God's always written on ceilings  
The burning bugle called creation's first light  
The beetle-black sky at His Son's execution  
The celestial graffiti of a star-scrambled night  
God's been expressing  
Himself  
For ages.

The second thing to note (and this may seem difficult to connect with as you toil away in the library or over the relentless eye of a word processor) but wisdom is actually seen in that passage as something that should be fun. The word which the NIV translates as "rejoicing" can also have the sense of playfulness about it. Indeed another version says that wisdom was: playing in God's presence continually. It's just a hunch, but I guess that not many of you find the search for wisdom as something that is particularly "playful". But if we could rediscover something of that original spirit of wisdom then labs or assignments or essays or whatever would take on a very different feel.

I wonder whether it is through this biblical idea of play that we can re-energise our understanding of wisdom in all its richness. Certainly, one of the places that we can rediscover the sense of play in the world and in ourselves is through worship. In Col 3: 16 Paul makes a strong connection between the richness of the Gospel and music:

Let the gospel of Christ dwell among you in all its richness; teach and instruct one another with all the wisdom it gives you. With psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, sing from the heart in gratitude to God. (Col 3: 16)

Perhaps the missing link between creation, wisdom, music and St Paul is C S Lewis. In *The Magician's Nephew* (which is the first of the Narnia Chronicles - in reading order, that is) he describes how creation came about through music:

In the darkness something was happening. A voice had begun to sing. It was very far away and Digory found it hard to decide from what direction it was coming. Sometimes it seemed to come from all directions at once. Sometimes he almost thought it was coming out of the earth beneath them ... There were no words. There was hardly even a tune. But it was beyond comparison, the most beautiful noise he had ever heard ...

The two wonders happened at the same moment. One was that the voice was suddenly joined by other voices; more voices than you could possibly

count ... The second wonder was that the blackness, overhead, all at once was blazing with stars ... One moment there had been nothing but darkness; next moment a thousand, thousand points of light leaped out - single stars, constellations, and planets, brighter and bigger than any in our world ...

For the Biblical authors and for Christians ever since wisdom, music and worship are some of the most treasured riches given by God and some of the richest ways of discovering and proclaiming the Gospel.

## 2. *The Richness of Worship*

I don't know if you've seen Whoopi Goldberg in either of the *Sister Act* films. I have to confess that I've only seen the first one, which is based around the totally improbable plot that Whoopi Goldberg is a cabaret singer in LA who has to hide in a convent from her gangster lover who she saw kill someone in cold blood. While she's keeping a low profile with the nuns, she turns the convent literally inside-out as they stop looking inwards and turn outwards to the local community and begin to take the idea of loving ones neighbour literally. The other thing she does is take over the running of the nuns' choir which goes from being a pretty lack-lustre outfit to an energetic group of women who sing gospel hymn and songs, together with 60s classics whose lyrics have been suitably changed! And with a great air of inevitability it all ended up with the convent being revitalised, Whoopi Goldberg being saved from the villain and the choir giving a big concert at the end.

One a more serious note I think the film show us two things about worship. First, Gospel music and Gospel choirs are very powerful phenomena (and this shows itself in other recent films too - like Steve Martin's movie about a phoney faith-healer called *Leap of Faith*). Certainly when I've been to black Pentecostal churches both in this country and elsewhere I've found the experience very moving and richly rewarding. But there's a second point as well, whether or not the people who made the *Sister Act* have ever seen the inside of a church or have any kind of faith at all is perhaps irrelevant because even they can recognise from a so-called secular perspective that worship can have a transforming effect on a community of faith. And if its obvious to

movie-makers then surely within the Body of Christ there can be no debate. And yet there is as this imagined conversation between Jesus and Peter shows...

## **Praise Music**

by John L. Bell & Graham Maule

PETER: Eh ... Jesus ...?

JESUS: Yes, Peter.

PETER: Do you like music?

JESUS: What kind of music, Peter? ...  
folk ... country and eastern ...  
Hebrew chants?

PETER: I was thinking more in the line of ... 'praise music'.

JESUS: Where do you hear that, Peter?

PETER: Everywhere, all the time.  
It used to be only in the synagogue,  
but now people are doing it in their house.  
I even saw a neighbour at it in his garden,  
Flapping his arms and making a noise like a sparrow with asthma.

JESUS: Maybe he was just praising God.

PETER: Yes, but God doesn't like praise music.

JESUS: Pardon?

PETER: Exactly ...  
That's the contradiction ...  
God doesn't like praise music and you do.

JESUS: And who told you God doesn't like praise music?

PETER: Amos.

JESUS: A personal conversation was it, Peter?

PETER: No.  
It's my favourite verse in his prophecy.  
I heard it again last week in the synagogue.  
If I remember correctly it said ...  
'Stop your noisy songs. I don't want listen to your music.'  
I'll bet you any money it was praise music.



JESUS: And just supposing it was?

PETER: Jesus, if it was, I've got you cornered.

JESUS: How come?

PETER: Simple.  
 God hates praise music, you love it.  
 Heaven's going to hear a few arguments when you return.

JESUS: Peter,  
 since I'm 'cornered', can I ask you a question?

PETER: Go ahead.

JESUS: If God hates 'praise music'  
 why did he let Moses and Miriam dance for joy  
 after they've crossed the Red Sea?  
 Why did he let the Israelites sing in the desert  
 at the place where water gushed out the rock?  
 Why did he allow David not just to sing, but to dance and sing,  
 whenever he got saved from an enemy?  
 Why did he listen to Jonah singing choruses in the belly of a whale?  
 Why did ...

PETER: (INTERRUPTING)  
 Wait a moment, Jesus,  
 I thought you only wanted to ask one question!

JESUS: So I did.  
 I was just putting it in different ways.  
 If God doesn't like what you call 'praise music',  
 why does he let so many of his people enjoy it?

PETER: (FLUSTERED)  
 Would you mind if I opened a window?

JESUS: Peter, there are no windows to open.  
 Nor is there any way out.  
 It's you who's cornered.

PETER: But what about Amos? Did he get it wrong?

JESUS: No, he got it right.  
 The praise which God accepts,  
 the songs which he loves to hear

are those which come not from fad or fashion,  
but because something has happened ...  
because people have travelled from danger to safety,  
or from darkness to light, or from despair to hope ...

PETER: ... or from a ship's hold to a whale's belly?

JESUS: ... or from a ship's hold to a whale's belly.  
Better a whale that might vomit you up than a grave at the bottom of the  
ocean.

And when people sing and shout  
after they've been healed,  
God accepts that praise too  
because they've travelled from sickness to health  
or from rejection to acceptance.  
They've got a reason to celebrate.

PETER: But what about Amos?

JESUS: I'm not forgetting Amos.  
Amos was pointing to what God loathes and detests ...  
praise which comes from the top of the head  
and not the heart ...  
praise which comes from people who have never travelled,  
who've never left their religious nappies ...  
songs which have become a substitute for serving the poor.  
Now, has that solved your dilemma?

PETER: Eh yes.

JESUS: You're a great boy for the questions, Peter.

PETER: I take that off my mother.  
Come to think of it,  
You're a great boy for the singing, Jesus.

JESUS: And I take that off my mother.

(Bell & Maule 1988)

To go from one extreme to another - from Gospel to classical music. Three of the most widely regarded composers classical composers of the moment (perhaps the three composers of the moment) are the Englishman John Tavener, the Pole Henryk

Górecki and the Estonian Arvo Pärt. And all three make no secret of the fact that their music is intimately related and deeply rooted in their Christian faith. The inspiration for their work comes from their Christian beliefs and spirituality. And, just on a personal level, I find that supports my faith enormously. The idea that the life, death and resurrection of Jesus inspires black gospel music in America and classical music in Estonia plus all stations in between is a vivid illustration of how Jesus crosses all boundaries and transcends human barriers.

A week ago at the Friday Discussion Group in the Chaplaincy, the University's Assistant Secretary played an extract from a taped conversation with Joyce Hugget in which she described how much she valued her charismatic background but also her more recent discovery of silence in worship. God has richly blessed us with all sorts of different gifts for worship which inspire, nurture and challenge us. Of course not everyone is to our own personal liking but if we take seriously what Paul says about being the Body of Christ then we surely acknowledge that the foot will go about things in a different way the eye while at the same remain part of the whole.

### **3.     *The Richness of God's Love***

If you look up 1 Cor 12 in the NIV you will see that there are two headings. Before Paul talks about this image of the Church as the Body of Christ he talks about the spiritual gifts. In verses 4-6:

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works in all.

And then he goes on to expound in the next chapter about love. These two chapters are absolutely fundamental to Christian communities, fellowship and churches. The love of God has to be our lubricant or the whole mechanism seizes up; it grinds to a halt; or is overcome by friction. I want to finish with two stories which contain and explore this crucial insight of Paul's. Many of Jesus' parables were agricultural in nature, so I make no apology for the fact that both of these are as well.

A farmer, whose wheat always took the first prize at the local agricultural fair had the habit of sharing his best seed with all the farmers in the neighbourhood.

When asked why, he said, "It is really a matter of self-interest. The wind picks up the pollen and carries it from field to field. So if my neighbours grow inferior corn the cross-pollination brings down the quality of my corn. That is why I am concerned that they plant only the very best.

The second one is about a gardener who took great pride in her lawn, but found herself with a large crop of dandelions. She tried every method that she know of to get rid of them but still they plagued her.

Finally she wrote to the Dept of Agriculture and enumerated all the things that she had tried on these weeds, closing the letter with the question: "What shall I do now?"

In due course the reply came: "We suggest that you learn to love them."

### ***Conclusion***

Jesus had a good deal to say about scattering seed and about weeds. If you look at the parable of the sower (in Mt 13 or elsewhere) its important to notice that the farmer doesn't just scatter the seed on the good soil, but scatters it everywhere - on the rocks, amongst the weeds, on the thin soil. The love of God is indiscriminate. Jesus also makes it clear that there will be a time of harvest when the corn and the weeds are gathered up, but the time of the harvest and the method of harvest lies with God, and God alone. Meanwhile the corn and the weeds grow together. Again the implication is clear our duty is to follow Jesus and Paul is sowing the seeds of God's love and leave the harvesting up to God.

But... this is not the easy option! Learning to love weeds is not easy. It's easy to be glib and say: all we need to do is learn to love our work, our assignments, our practicals, our labs, our kitchen group, the people we work with, even (sometimes!) our fellow Christians. It's not easy, in fact God found it so hard that he died in the process. But we too are called to follow the way of Christ and that's why it is important to value the riches that God has given us. It is good to delight in creation

and to be playful as wisdom was at the dawn of creation. It is good to delight in worship and (in some ways) to be playful in that as well with the great riches that God has given there. But it one of the paradoxes of God that the richness of the Gospel can call us to give up everything as Christ did, and embrace the way of divine love and we can only do that the Gospel of Christ dwells within our hearts in all its richness:

Let the gospel of Christ dwell among you in all its richness; teach and instruct one another with all the wisdom it gives you. With psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, sing from the heart in gratitude to God. (Col 3: 16)

## Appendix 14: 'Just A Thought ...'

**from Spike – Issue 211 (December 1995)**

*What is the connection between cannabis and Christmas, magic mushrooms and the magi? Vaughan Roberts reflects on the opium of the people, Adam & Eve why some people never drink coffee and what it has to do with a baby in a manger?*

### **MAGIC MUSHROOMS?**

I was asked to speak in the this term's debate about the legalization of cannabis and to argue the case that laws on soft drugs should not be relaxed. There has always been an ambiguous relationship between religion and narcotics. For instance, there's John Allegro's off-beat theory that Christianity is really due to Jesus' disciples eating too many magic mushrooms; there's Karl Marx's famous soundbite that "religion is the opiate of the people" plus there's the traditional Methodist suspicion of alcohol through to the Mormon prohibition on coffee because it contains artificial stimulants!

### **MORE TEA, VICAR?**

Perhaps it was these approaches to drink and caffeine which meant that I was automatically asked to speak against the idea that cannabis should be legalised. Interestingly, a medical doctor who is also an evangelical Christian found himself amongst the shock-horror headlines in the tabloid press earlier this year when he argued for the de-criminalisation of the same drug and he is coming to speak at the Chaplaincy next term. So why should it be assumed that a Christian would necessarily be against the use of certain drugs and stimulants? After all the tea drinking vicar; the sherry drinking bishop and the Guinness drinking priest are stock caricatures in the popular mind and all three substances have addictive qualities.

### **APPLES IN THE GARDEN**

Part of the answer may lie with Adam and Eve. Let me explain. In this instance, it doesn't matter whether we believe that there were actually two people of that name or not. The story has exercised (and continues to exercise) a powerful impact upon a number of faiths (not just Christianity) and upon our culture. Traditionally monotheistic religion, and especially Christianity, is seen as world denying because of

the account of The Fall in the Garden of Eden. It was at this point, so the argument goes, evil entered creation and spoiled what had been made perfect by God at the start.

### **SEX & DRUGS & ROCK 'N' ROLL**

Now, here Christians have always diverged and gone off in two different directions. And it's here that denial of the world enters the frame. Some believe that the story of The Fall teaches that all matter must therefore be treated with utmost suspicion whereas others feel that, despite all the pain, disfigurement and abuse in creation, the material world was created by God and is therefore fundamentally good. If that's the case then everything including pleasure, sex, alcohol, drugs (even coffee) has its ultimate origins with God. And, like our use of creation's natural resources, the real issue is with our use and abuse of God's gifts rather than denying them completely or exploiting with no restraints whatsoever.

### **A MATERIAL CHRISTMAS?**

That's why Christmas is so important. The story of the baby in a manger and the shepherds and their sheep isn't just a lovely fairy tale for kids to go along with Father Christmas coming down a chimney and leaving Street Fighter 121 at the bottom of the bed. Again, the issues here go much deeper because, at its heart, Christmas is a creation-affirming account of how God is involved with the material world in which we live and is working with it to bring about hope when hopelessness can sometimes seem to have taken over.

### **GOD**

So, the legalisation of cannabis is part of a much larger debate about how we treat our bodies. After all it is perfectly possible to abuse them through substances that are freely available – tobacco, alcohol, even, food! And Christmas is part of the much larger picture of how we relate to creation, how we relate to God and how God relates to us. As we approach Christmas we need to remember that humanity is a paradox. We are created with a certain amount of freedom but we are also created as dependent beings – dependent on our physical, emotional and spiritual needs; dependent on our relationships with other people, creation and that sense of the ultimate which is God.

## Appendix 15: My Body

### A Poetic Response to Dali's 'Last Supper'

*This is my body which is given for  
you. Do this in memory of me.*

What form does a memory take?  
Fleeting moments of peace beside  
tranquil waters with heads ... bowed in  
the presence of the One? Or raging  
anger, storms of passion, ancient heights and  
unknown depths with heads ... bowed in shame?  
Perhaps we know ourselves for the first  
time?

*This is my body which is given for  
you. Do this in memory of me.*

What form does a memory take?  
I have no memory of that  
meal nor was I present in the  
upper room. Although, I have been  
in many upper rooms since, where disciples  
have argued over the broken pieces and  
squabbled over which crumb was most  
important.

*This is my body which is given for you.  
Do this in memory of me.*

What form does a memory take?  
The memory of the one who ate  
with all, but whose body now  
chooses its table guests. That  
body which has eaten so many  
loaves, must die new deaths to



know itself, its selves, in the company of others.

*This is my body which is given for you.*

*Do this in memory of me.*

What form does a body take?

It is not white and statuesque nor  
compliant to my wishes and my  
desires. A body is hungry and steps  
off the canvas, aching to  
touch. It can be wounded. A body  
can bleed red and it may bleed  
love.

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